

PLATE I



DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

# ART and THOUGHT

Issued in honour of  
DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY  
on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

*Edited by*

K. BHARATHA IYER



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DEDICATION

This Volume is Dedicated  
to  
DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY  
on the occasion of his 70th Birthday  
August 22, 1947

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	xiii
CARMEN NATALICUM. By WALTER SHREWRING	I
CONCERNING FORMS IN ART. By FRITHJOF SCHUON (Switzerland)	5
THE BIRTH OF VENUS: AN ESSAY ON COLOURS. By LUC BENOIST (France)	14
PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF TRADITIONAL ART. By TITUS BURCKHARDT	17
FROM ART TO SPIRITUALITY. By JACQUES DE MARQUETTE, DR. ES LETTRES (Calif.)	23
A CRAFT AS A FOUNTAIN OF GRACE AND A MEANS OF REALIZATION. By ARISTIDE MESSINESI (Greece)	31
TWO MESOPOTAMIAN SEALS OF THE URUK PERIOD. By MISS ALICE GETTY (U.S.A.)	41
STUDIES IN THE BUDDHIST ART OF BĀMIYĀN. By BENJAMIN ROWLAND, Jr.	46
THE GUPTA TEMPLE AT DEVAGARH. By DR. VASUDEV S. AGRAWALA (New Delhi)	51
SANSKRIT LETTERS AS MYSTICAL SYMBOLS IN LATER BUDDHISM OUTSIDE INDIA. By DR. LUCIAN SCHERMAN (U.S.A.)	55
TIBETAN BOOK COVERS. By PROF. G. TUCCI	63
A PAINTING OF A JAIN PILGRIMAGE. By PROF. W. NORMAN BROWN (U.S.A.)	69
THE TROUBLED IMAGE: AN ESSAY UPON MUGHAL PAINTING. By ERIC SCHROEDER (U.S.A.)	73
RAJPUT ART: ITS PROBLEMS. By DR. H. GOETZ (Curator, Baroda State Museum)	87
THE VALIDITY OF INDIAN HANDICRAFTS IN THIS INDUSTRIAL ERA. By RICHARD B. GREGG (The Putney School, Putney, Vermont, U.S.A.)	95
THE TIRANŌKKU: OR "CURTAIN LOOK" By K. BHARATHA IYER	101
THE MAGIC BALL AND THE GOLDEN FRUIT IN ANCIENT CHINESE ART. By DR. ALFRED SALMONY (U.S.A.)	105
THE NEDZU HO: CHINESE RITUAL BRONZE VESSELS OF THE HO TYPE. By MISS FLORENCE WATERBURY (U.S.A.)	110
A PERENNIAL PUZZLE: THE MOTIVE OF THREE FISH WITH A COMMON HEAD. By DR. CARL SCHUSTER (U.S.A.)	116
COSMIC SYMBOLISM ON THE DRAGON ROBES OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY. By SCHUYLER CAMMANN (U.S.A.)	126
ON THE ÆSTHETIC ATTITUDE IN ROMANESQUE ART. By MEYER SCHAPIRO (U.S.A.)	130
LOS URTHONA AND BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATIONS TO DANTE. By SHERMAN E. LEE (U.S.A.)	151
MENDELÉYEV'S MOTHER. By GEORGE SARTON (U.S.A.)	158
AL GHAZZĀLĪ ON BEAUTY. By RICHARD ETTINGHAUSEN (U.S.A.)	160
THE MYSTERIES OF THE LETTER NŪN. By RENÉ GUÉNON (France)	166
ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EASTERN MEDITATION. By DR. C. G. JUNG (Zurich). Translated by CAROL BAUMANN	169
SCIENCE AND RELIGION. By S. RADHAKRISHNAN	180
RIG-VEDA I, 31: A TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY. By DR. MURRAY FOWLER (Harvard University)	186
CHHĀNDOGYA UPANISHADS. By NICHOLAS ROERICH	193
THE BANNER OF INDRA. By STELLA KRAMRISCH	197
WAYFARING. By MISS I. B. HORNER (England)	202
DUROHANA AND THE "WAKING DREAM". By MIRCEA ELIADE	209
THE VALIDITY OF THE ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLE. By KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI (England)	214
ATOM AND ĀṆU. By KURT F. LEIDECKER (U.S.A.)	219

*CONTENTS—continued*

SYMBOLISM AND SOCIETY. By HOWARD C. HOLLIS (U.S.A.)	- - -	222
THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAKEDNESS. By PROF. JAMES MARSHALL PLUMER (U.S.A.)	- - -	224
DO CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN? By MARCO PALLIS (Greece)	- - -	227
INDIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD. By CAPTAIN ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI (England)	- - -	238
ACTIVE TRADITION OF THE EAST AND WEST. By ALBERT GLEIZES (France)	- - -	244
MOTHER TONGUE OF THE DANCE. By JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY (U.S.A.)	- - -	252

## LIST OF PLATES

PLATE. FIG.

### FRONTISPIECE

- I. DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY.

### A CRAFT AS A FOUNTAIN OF GRACE. (Pages 40-41)

- II. 1. EXAMPLES OF BROCADE, PERSIAN DESIGN.  
2. EXAMPLES OF BROCADE, INDIAN DESIGN.  
III. 3. EXAMPLES OF BROCADE, CHINESE DESIGN.  
IV. 4. CARPET.  
V. 5. CARPET MADE IN KASHMIR, MUGHAL DESIGN.

### TWO MESOPOTAMIAN SEALS OF THE URUK PERIOD. (Pages 44-45)

- VI. 1. STAATLICHEN MUSEUM, BERLIN.  
2. IRAQ MUSEUM.

### THE GUPTA TEMPLE AT DEVAGARH. (Pages 54-55)

- VII. 1. RAMA REVIVIFYING AHALYA.  
2. RAMA, LAKSHMANA AND SITA GOING TO THE FOREST.  
VIII. 3. (a) SUGRIVA WITH HIS WIFE AND ANGADA.  
(b) FIGHT BETWEEN BALI AND SUGRIVA.  
(c) RAMA, GARLANDING, SUGRIVA.  
4. NANDA AND YASODA WITH BALARAMA AND KRISHNA.  
IX. 5. DOORWAY OF THE DEVAGARH TEMPLE.

### TIBETAN BOOK COVERS. (Pages 68-69)

- X. 1. SHEWING FIGURE OF PRAJNAPARAMITA IN CENTRE.  
2. SHEWING FIGURE OF PRAJNAPARAMITA IN CENTRE.  
XI. 3. SHEWING FIGURE OF AJAM DPAL ABYANS IN CENTRE.  
4. THE FIVE SUPREME BUDDHAS.  
XII. 5. TIBETAN BOOK COVER FROM TOLING.  
6. A COMBINATION OF ICONOGRAPHIC AND ORNAMENTAL STYLES.  
XIII. 7. A TSAPARANG FRESCO PAINTING.

### A PAINTING OF A JAIN PILGRIMAGE. (Pages 72-73)

- XIV. INDIAN PAINTED COTTON TEXTILE—XVIII CENTURY.

### "THE TROUBLED IMAGE." (Pages 80-81)

- XV. 1. YAKSHIS, FROM MATHURA.  
XVI. 2. TIRU JNANA SAMBANDHA SWAMI  
3. LOTUS-OFFERER, AJANTA.  
XVII. 4. KALPA SUTRA, MINIATURE (JAIN).  
5. DEATH OF INAYAT KHAN. 1628 A.D.  
XVIII. 6. WOMAN WITH FRUITING TREES.  
8. AKBAR AND CHADRUP.  
XIX. 7. KALI-DURGA VISITS PAN DAVA CAMP.  
XX. 9. A NOCTURNAL GATHERING OF ASCETICS.  
XXI. 10. TROUBLED IMAGE-SCHOREDER.

# LIST OF PLATES—continued

PLATE. FIG.

## RAJPUT ART: IT'S PROBLEMS. (Pages 88-89)

- |        |     |                               |
|--------|-----|-------------------------------|
| XXII.  | 1.  | THE PRECURSORS OF RAJPUT ART. |
|        | 2.  | RAJPUT RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE. |
| XXIII. | 3.  | PURE RAJPUT SCULPTURE.        |
|        | 4.  | RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE.          |
|        |     | (Pages 94-95)                 |
| XXIV.  | 5.  | RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE.          |
|        | 6.  | RAJPUT WALL PAINTING.         |
| XXV.   | 7.  | RAJPUT ART (GOETZ).           |
|        | 8.  | RAJPUT ART (GOETZ).           |
| XXVI.  | 9.  | RAJPUT ART (GOETZ).           |
| XXVII. | 10. | RAJPUT ART (GOETZ).           |

## THE TIRANOKKU: OR "CURTAIN LOOK." (Pages 104-105)

- XXVIII. TIRANOKKU (CURTAIN LOOK) OF RAVANA.

## "THE MAGIC BALL AND THE GOLDEN FRUIT." (Pages 108-109)

- |       |    |  |
|-------|----|--|
| XXIX. | 2. | BELT BUCKLE (GILT BRONZE).               |
|       | 3. | SADDLE-COVER (FELT).                     |
|       | 4. | BELT BUCKLE (BRONZE).                    |
| XXX.  | 1. | POLE END (BRONZE) GOLD AND SILVER INLAY. |
|       | 5. | HORIZONTAL POLE-END (BRONZE).            |

## "THE NEDZU HO." (Pages 112-113)

- |         |    |  |
|---------|----|--|
| XXXI.   | 1. | NEDZU HO I, INSCRIBED "RIGHT."                 |
| XXXII.  | 2. | EWER FROM CH'I CHIA P'ING, KANSU.              |
|         | 3. | TWO VIEWS OF EWER FROM CH'I CHIA P'ING, KANSU. |
| XXXIII. | 5. | "HO" FORMERLY IN GERMAN STATE MUSEUM.          |
| XXXIV.  | 6. | HO, FREER GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C.     |

## COSMIC SYMBOLISM ON THE DRAGON ROBES. (Pages 128-129)

- |        |    |                                     |
|--------|----|-------------------------------------|
| XXXV.  | 1. | FIRST TYPE OF CH'ING DRAGON ROBE.   |
|        | 2. | MORE DEVELOPED TYPE OF DRAGON ROBE. |
| XXXVI. | 3. | A LATER CH'ING DRAGON ROBE.         |

## LOS-URTHONA AND BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATIONS TO DANTE. (Pages 152-153)

- |          |     |  |
|----------|-----|--|
| XXXVII.  | 1.  | BLAKE WITH LOS, STEPPING FROM THE SUN.                 |
| XXXVIII. | 2.  | PURGATORIO, CANTO XXXII, CHARIOT OF BEATRICE.          |
| XXXIX.   | 3.  | PURGATORIO, CANTO XXIX AND XXX, CHARIOT OF BEATRICE.   |
| XL.      | 4.  | HELL, DANTE RUNNING FROM THREE BEASTS.                 |
| XLI.     | 5.  | HELL, GERYON CARRYING VIRGIL AND DANTE.                |
| XLII.    | 6.  | HELL, THE SERPENT ATTACKING AGNOLO BRUNELLESCHI.       |
| XLIII.   | 7.  | HELL, CANTO XXV, BY BOTTICELLI.                        |
| XLIV.    | 8.  | PURGATORY, ANGEL INVITING DANTE INTO THE FLAMES.       |
|          |     | (Pages 156-157)  |
| XLV.     | 9.  | PURGATORY, ANGEL INVITING DANTE TO ENTER FIRE.         |
| XLVI.    | 10. | PARADISE, ST. PETER, ST. JAMES, BEATRICE AND ST. JOHN. |

# LIST OF PLATES—continued

PLATE. FIG.

MENDELEYEV'S MOTHER.  
(Pages 158-159)

XLVII. 1.  
XLVIII. 2.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAKEDNESS.  
(Pages 224-225)

XLIX. 1. *Yakshi* ON EAST TORANA.  
L. 2. VENUS RISING FROM THE WAVES.

ACTIVE TRADITION IN THE EAST AND WEST.  
(Pages 250-251)

LI. 1. CELTIC MENHIR  
2. ANALYSIS IN SPACE AND TIME.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN TEXT

### STUDIES IN BUDDHIST ART.

BODHISATTVA, GROUP E, BAMİYAN, AFGHANISTAN - - Page 47.

### THE NEDZU HO.

COVER OF HO III - - - - - Page 111.  
CIRCLES ENCLOSING CROSS MADE WITH DOTS - - - Page 113.

### A PERENNIAL PUZZLE.

Fig. 1. DESIGN FROM A CHINESE ALMANAC - - - Page 119.  
Fig. 2. MOTIVES FROM A 13TH CENTURY FRENCH MANUSCRIPT - Page 119.  
Figs. 3-11. NINE MOTIVES - - - - - Page 121.  
Figs. 12-17. SIX MOTIVES - - - - - Page 123.

### ACTIVE TRADITION OF THE EAST AND WEST.

Fig. 1. BUDDHA—THE GUPTA EPOCH - - - Page 247.  
Fig. 2. SPACE—TIME—ETERNITY - - - Page 247.  
Fig. 1. THE GLORIFIED CHRIST OF ST. SAVIN SUR GARTEMPE - Page 248.  
Fig. 2. ETERNITY—RHYTHM, TIME—CADENCE, SPACE—FIGURE - Page 248.





## INTRODUCTION

EARLY in 1944, in the course of a letter, I suggested to Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, not without hesitation, that he should consider the possibilities of sharing with his admirers the absorbing and momentous story of his life, a life the activities of which have taken him into almost every part of the world and into the most diverse cultural periods of mankind. With a self-effacement so characteristic of him he replied : "I would not think of writing my autobiography, for I believe with *Sūkrānītisāra* that portraiture is *asvargya* ! There are only a very few autobiographies that I think have been necessary and fully justified. I myself am not interested in my personal history and could not make it of interest or value to anyone else. The task before us all is to 'become no one' ; for He, as the *Kalhā Upanishad* says, 'never became any one'." This unusual attitude on his part, if it did not prove quite consoling, set me on a different train of thought ; whence sprang the idea of this homage volume of essays. The enthusiasm shown by the many distinguished scholars who were consulted and the obvious sincerity with which they offered to co-operate has made the work on this enterprise a rare and genuine pleasure.

Perhaps no tribute could be more appropriate to the many-sided genius of Dr. Coomaraswamy than an international co-operative endeavour like this collection, in which scholars who are eminent in the most varied branches of religion, art, literature, mythology and metaphysic as related to India, Greater India, China, Persia, Babylonia and the Western world have come together to pay homage by offering some of their own very best contributions. By so doing, they have built a golden bridge across the narrow national and racial boundaries (which far more than in the past keep us divided), welding the various peoples of the world in spiritual fraternity, symbolic indeed of the whole life work of Coomaraswamy himself. Once again, this book is comparable to his own many-phased work, because it deals with the manifold aspects of the art and thought of so many cultures, those aspects being pursued not as isolated or merely interesting phenomena, but as intrinsically and integrally related to an all-comprehensive art of life—the supreme art one might say—though its values are completely ignored at the present time. This volume of essays, though by hands so diverse and dealing with themes so various, significantly enough displays a coherent and rich pattern which reveals its own unity. It reflects and expresses the fundamental traditional unity of mankind in metaphysic, mythology, theology, folklore, the arts and the sciences. With amazing depth of understanding writer after writer brings together a wealth of information which establishes this unity on foundations as broad as they are unshakable. The reader will come across so many startling corroborations drawn from Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Islamic sources (Asiatic and European alike) that he will soon have ceased to regard these nomenclatures as anything but complementary and vitally inter-related ones. In fact, the reader who had regarded himself as specifically Hindu or Christian, Asiatic or European, will soon begin to wonder how much of him is also of the other and the labels themselves will acquire a new value for him in proportion as he is reborn into this understanding. He will feel re-invested, as it were, with a sovereign right to the glorious heritage of mankind, before which all sectional and partisan claims appear mean and treacherous. If only this volume helps somewhat to clear the ghastly myopia now affecting the so-called

## INTRODUCTION

leaders of nations, recreating in them a sense of loyalty to Man himself, a great and useful purpose will have been served by the publication of such a book at this time of peril, when every day seems to usher in newer and greater tyrannies in the guise of false ideologies that contradict sane living. That there is a widespread and calamitous decline in international good manners is only an additional proof of the fact that the traditional ethical foundations of society have been rudely shaken all over the world and need immediate strengthening. World War No. 2 has officially ended, but without achieving any kind of real peace. It has carried its conflicts far beyond the battle-field into every country and almost into every home. There must be something radically wrong with a civilization when its every constituent group is dominated by self-assertive values and glories in so doing. Modern man has developed an outlook and conduct more sinister and ruthless than those of any so-called savages; besides his tendencies are highly self-distinctive. The thousand and one trappings of civilization of which he is so proud hardly serve to conceal the utter poverty of his soul. Therefore, the fundamental and most immediate problem that faces us is not the outlawry of war or of the atom bomb or the establishment of some international authority or other; the task before us is nothing less than the rehabilitation of Man. This suicidal game of the denial of Man must stop forthwith; otherwise we will inevitably "perish by the root." Any hope of building up a brave new world through the efforts of a crippled and de-natured humanity is fantastically absurd. The intellectual and moral re-conditioning of men should logically take precedence over all other measures; but it seems too much to hope that the politicians and their henchmen who as a result of the terrible confusion of castes now prevailing have usurped the leadership will in any way show competence for this supreme task.

The intellectual elite—the true poet, artist, thinker and prophet, the natural leaders of mankind—should come together and direct; for they alone can re-kindle the divine spark which at present is all but smothered under heaps of intellectualised rubbish. The re-establishment of the traditional values is therefore the first step in the process of the re-conditioning of Man. Tradition is intellectual heredity and much more; to ignore this fact is to bring into being a bastard, nay a monstrous civilization.\* This collection of essays which lays stress on traditional values provides an example of true international co-operation; let it be regarded as an earnest of the vast measures that are yet to be undertaken if a new world order is to emerge in spite of politicians, dictators and the rackets that have replaced almost every normal activity of life.

To those in the East, this Festschrift brings a particular message. The assault on their immemorial and sacred traditions has been carried on in a hundred subtle and surreptitious ways. So successful have been these subversive operations that to-day many Easterners are themselves imbued with a feverish desire to destroy their own heritage as a compliment to modernism. The more fanatical among them are doing their best to obliterate all traces of the pattern and colours settled by ages, by applying right and left a thick coat of the standard white-wash, and for this service they feel that they have done something for which posterity should be grateful. If this volume could help to correct these people's perspective somewhat by infusing into their hearts a little courage to resist the siren call away from their *dharma*, the work of compiling it would

\* This should not be construed as an unqualified praise of everything that goes by the name of tradition which for aught we know may be merely time-bound accidental institutions of the past. Tradition as the preserver of eternal values and the embodiment of the deepest experience and wisdom of mankind is of timeless validity. The abuse of tradition does not invalidate the tradition itself.

## INTRODUCTION

not have been wasted ; it is chiefly a question of regaining a mental equilibrium that has been lost, and if mankind is to be re-born into a new era of understanding and comradeship, the priceless cultural heritage of the ages has to be saved. Will those in the East discharge their trust now or will they too gamble away their treasure beyond any chance of redemption ?

It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the individual merits of the contributions. They "hew to the line" of scholarship and are the fruits of mature minds who have persevered with great devotion and distinction in their chosen fields of scholarship. The sheer quality and pioneering value of these studies makes them invaluable to scholars, but they are also written so as to benefit the average man, who badly needs educating in matters relating to art and thought, spheres from which he has been treacherously excluded.

As for Dr. Coomaraswamy himself, there is hardly any aspect of art and thought which he has not enriched or ennobled. Specifically in matters relating to the Indian and other Eastern traditions his contributions have been immense. If to-day the barriers of ignorance and prejudice about Indian culture and life have been largely broken down and if India has been accorded a very important place in the cultural map of the world, this is in no small measure due to the immensely distinguished work of Dr. Coomaraswamy. While his achievements in a single field would be enough to perpetuate his memory, the aggregate of his contributions in varied spheres of learning is such as to make him into one of the unique leaders of mankind. With profound wisdom and deep integrity he has laboured consistently and heroically to expose the fallacies of "progress" and to recover for our civilization the poise and dignity it has lost. He has shown us the way to reinvest an empty and frivolous life with meaning and purpose, generating hope where frustration had laid its hand, recalling order in the midst of general confusion and holding out the prospect of resurrection in the face of intellectual and even material death.

Dr. Coomaraswamy's call to the service of the Perennial Philosophy has gained many eminent adherents. Some, at least, among the intellectuals of the world are gradually but surely becoming aware of how much his labours mean for mankind. As one of our distinguished contributors observes, men like Coomaraswamy "throw the shadow of eternity into their own day." He is a sage and seer who (as Dr. J. Marquette writes to me) "while completely aware of the illusory character of the world of objectivity" has "the attitude of the Buddha of compassion who refuses to enter *Nirvana* before 'the least blade of grass has been redeemed.' That this supremely human attitude should be arrived at not by a priest of one of the great religions but by a scholar is a most heartening experience for all the devotees of the larger Humanities of which he is an outstanding exponent." No tribute could be more appropriate than the one paid by Eric Gill to Coomaraswamy, one which bears any amount of repetition. "... there was one person, to whom I think William Rothenstein introduced me, whom I might not have met otherwise and to whose influence I am deeply grateful: I mean the philosopher and theologian Ananda Coomaraswamy. Others have written the truth about life and religion and man's work. Others have written good clear English. Others have had the gift of witty exposition. Others have understood the metaphysics of Christianity and others have understood the metaphysics of Hinduism and Buddhism. Others have understood the true significance of erotic drawings and sculptures. Others have seen the relationships of the true and the good and the beautiful. Others have had apparently unlimited learning. Others have loved; others have been kind and generous. But I

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## INTRODUCTION

know of no one else in whom all these gifts and all these powers have been combined. I dare not confess myself his disciple ; that would only embarrass him. I can only say that no other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding."

On this occasion of his 70th birthday his many admirers and disciples spread all over the world come together to express through this volume, their deep-felt gratitude and admiration to Dr. Coomaraswamy and to wish him many happy returns.

I am deeply grateful to the contributors for their generous sympathy and co-operation. Owing to the shortness of time and limitation of space it was not found feasible to accept all the kind offers to contribute or to invite other scholars who I am aware are eager to take part in a tribute of this nature. Perhaps it may be found possible to issue a companion volume on a future date, making this form of tribute more comprehensive and satisfying. Scholars who are in sympathy with this suggestion are requested to get into touch with me.

For their deep interest, helpful suggestions and kind services I am very much indebted to my esteemed friends Mr. Marco Pallis, Dr. Alfred Salmony, Dr. H. Goetz and Mr. P. N. Townsend. It was very kind of Mr. Townsend to have also agreed to read the proofs. For the encouragement and support given to this venture I am indebted to Fr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan and to Dr. Stella Kramrisch. I am very appreciative too of the many kind services rendered by my friend Mr. V. R. Narayana Iyer. For their sympathy and good wishes I am deeply grateful to Sri Arabindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Sir John Marshall and other admirers of Dr. Coomaraswamy.

The illustrations in this volume are all supplied by the contributors, and if any specific acknowledgment in respect of any of them is lacking, it is not intentional. Views that are personal opinions of the contributors need not necessarily be taken as endorsed by the Editor.

The publication of this large Festschrift with a dateline set on it was no easy task : shortage of paper and labour, the post war rush of work on the printing presses, the rising markets and the race against time are all factors that have affected the production of this book. I am aware of the scars left by these ; the shortcomings that may be noticed are mostly circumstantial. My indebtedness to the publishers, Messrs. Luzac & Co., and to Mr. Griffiths of the Burleigh Press is immense. But for their genuine enthusiasm for and sympathy with the objects of this publication it would not have been possible to produce it in time and in so worthy a manner.

K. B. IYER.

Since the book went to press we have been shocked to learn that Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy passed away suddenly on the 10th September. The loss to the world is great and irreparable. The world of art and thought accepted, admired and revered him not only as a towering intellect and pre-eminent scholar in many fields but also as one of the wisest and sanest leaders of mankind. Literally he wore himself out to the last in the service of mankind which will ever honour him as a *jagadguru*. This volume of tributes from leading men of all nationalities and ways of thinking is in itself testimony to this unique position he occupies.

It is somewhat sad to think that this volume could not be presented to him complete in spite of the best efforts of the publishers and printers, owing to the present difficulties in book production. Only a proof copy could be presented to him at the birthday dinner held at the Harvard Club. He was very pleased and wrote how highly he thought of the book.



## CARMEN NATALICIUM

**B**IS septena tibi qui lustra peracta celebret  
mittimus ecce librum ; consule missa boni.  
alite vellem equidem dona haec meliore venirent  
atque simul votis tempora laeta forent ;  
vellem ne miseras quateret discordia gentes  
ingruerentve novis morsque pavorque viis ;  
vellem homines passim ne recto adversa voluntas  
mensque ageret veri vana, fugaxque boni.  
sed tibi nulla subit facies inopina malorum ;  
perspicias, at nimium non tamen ista doles.  
tu maiorum animum moresque indutus avitos  
qua veteres ierant pergis et ipse via.  
tu praecepta doces quibus hi vixere beati,  
latura et nobis, si sapiamus, opem,  
et, si prisca animos moneat doctrina superbos,  
illa refers, sacris tradita carminibus :  
arcano triplicem penetret qui numine mundum,  
stamen uti gemmas, nectere cuncta deum ;  
ex illo gigni versarique omnia in illo,  
nec tamen ipsum ulla sede locove capi ;  
hinc leges petiisse suas terramque polumque  
stellarumque vias oceanique vices,  
hinc hominum ritus et regna et iura sacrata  
et quicquid recto fitve agiturve modo ;  
quare opus esse homini, penitus se noscat ut ipsum  
seque suo discat reddere principio,  
a nihilo in rem veram, in lucem ductus ab umbris,  
a morte in vitam quae sine fine manet.  
' talia qui norit ' (sic firman't dicta priorum)  
' huic pede inoffenso qualibet ire datur ;  
huic neque vesper adest neque adest aurora, sed unus  
lucet perpetuus purpureusque dies.'  
heu ! quam dissimiles nunc aetas impia iactat  
voces, ingenio non bene freta suo !  
vera homines votis, summa imis, sacra profanis,  
aeterna incertis posthabuisse iuvat,  
quaeque movent oculos, quae mole et pondere praestant,  
haec apud insanos numinis instar habent.  
mores interea similis dementia vexat  
urbesque et populos irrequieta premit.  
ius fugit indignos et regni lucidus ordo,  
nec licet officio quemque valere suo.

iustitiae expertes effundere nomina vana  
 non pudet imperii, vana ministerii,  
 quique solent uni aut multis servire tyrannis  
 libertatis amant spargere voce sonum.  
 iam, tua quae semper notissima cura fuerunt,  
 artes quo tandem cernimus esse loco ?  
 inde tibi exoritur promptissima causa dolendi  
 dum nova componis tempora praeteritis.  
 hinc statuis nostros, quibus imperat ipsa libido,  
 illinc quos ab avis tradita norma docet.  
 demitur hic hominum coetu qui clarus ab arte est ;  
 illic nullus homo non viget arte sua.  
 principium est illic omni deus ipse camenae ;  
 cantat, qui fidibus cantat ubique, deum.  
 nil ibi non sacrum ; signis et imagine parva  
 aeternum referunt numinis omnia opus,  
 pauperis et tectum leges imitatur et artem  
 qua deus hanc mundi condidit ante domum.  
 nos, genus infelix, tales haud novimus artes ;  
 non ea vita, ea mens, unde habeamus, adest.  
 iam rubor est, manibus visu maiora docere ;  
 sensus artifices conciliasse iuvat,  
 nec prodesse opera, sed pauci ostendere paucis  
 ingenii cupiunt pignora quisque sui.  
 quos sua poena manet ; dum temnitur utile et aptum,  
 unica quae petitur, gratia saepe fugit.  
 (ut melius Noster : ' verum sectare bonumque ;  
 ipsa aderit, nullo sollicitante, venus ' !)  
 o caeci, o miseri, mutant qui utenda fruendis !  
 quam longe a recta nunc abiere via !  
 pulchra oculis captant et captant auribus ; ipsum  
 pulchrorum fontem non didicere sequi.  
 haec mala tu spectas atque, ut res suaserit ipsa,  
 aut leni aut acri corripis illa modo,  
 arcessisque operi comites, quos saecula tulere  
 pristina, doctrina qui viguere proba.  
 nec proferre sat est, tua quos colit India vates,  
 Seribus aut doctos adnumerare Arabos.  
 (haud tantum Eois favit sapientia terris,  
 nec quondam erubuit visere et Hesperias.)  
 hinc quoque sumis opem ; magnique ex ore Platonis  
 pendes, atque alte condita vera petis.  
 nec tibi tres illi, celsissima nomina, desunt :  
 Ostia quem docuit se sociare deo,  
 quique sequi caelum caelesti carmine suadet,  
 isque, patet summi quo duce summa boni.

CARMEN NATELICIIUM

his cinctus sociis non frustra in proelia vadis,  
cui precor errantum det cito-turba manus.  
o venerande senex, etsi numquam ora tueri  
contigit, aut voces percipere aure tuas,  
at vix ulla tua propior mihi surgit imago ;  
vix mihi, quem recolam, crebrior ullus adest.  
et licet haud totus, quo ducis, consequar ipse,  
et quaedam hac potior sit mihi pacta fides,  
non tamen invenio sapienti pectore quemquam  
nec studio veri nec gravitate parem.  
salve, qui melius revocas virtutibus aevum ;  
nota tende via ; macte bonis animi ;  
nec desiste tuis meditari digna magistris  
nec meditata novis tradere discipulis.  
his tibi natalis placida cum pace fruenti  
candidior redeat candidiorque dies  
donec (quae proavis sollemnia verba fuere)  
Sol oculum atque animam Spiritus excipiat.  
WALTER SHEWRING.

## CONCERNING FORMS IN ART

BY FRITHJOF SCHUON (Switzerland)

### I

**T**HE question which we are about to consider here is far from being a matter of small importance from the spiritual point of view; on the contrary it is closely bound up with the deepest realities of human existence. First of all, we must clear up a question of terminology: in speaking of "forms in Art" and not just "forms," we would like to specify that this does not mean "abstract" forms, but on the contrary, things which can be defined as "sensible"; if, on the other hand, we avoid speaking of "artistic forms," it is because the epithet "artistic" carries with it, in present-day language, a notion of "luxury" and therefore of "superfluity"; this corresponds to something diametrically opposed to what we have in mind. In our sense, the expression "forms in Art" is a pleonasm, inasmuch as it is not possible to dissociate, traditionally speaking, form and Art, the latter being simply the principle of manifestation of the former; however, we have been obliged to use this pleonasm for the reasons just given.

What one must know, if one is to understand the importance of forms, is the fact that it is the sensible form which, symbolically, corresponds most directly to the Intellect, in consequence of the inverse analogy connecting the principial and manifested orders<sup>1</sup>; consequently, the highest realities are most patently manifested through their remotest reflection, namely in the sensible or "material" order, and herein lies the deepest meaning of the proverb "Extremes meet"; we will add that it is for this same reason that Revelation penetrated not only the spirit of the Prophets, but also their bodies, which presupposes their physical perfection<sup>2</sup>. Sensible forms therefore correspond more exactly to intellections, and it is for this reason that traditional Art has rules which apply the cosmic laws and universal principles to the domain of forms, and which, beneath their more general outward aspect, reveal the "style" of the civilization under consideration, this "style" in its turn rendering explicit the form of intellectuality of that civilization. When the art ceases to be traditional and becomes human, individual, and therefore arbitrary, that is infallibly the sign—and secondarily the cause—of an intellectual falling-off, a weakening, which, in the sight of those who know how to "discern the spirits" and who look upon things with an unprejudiced eye, is expressed by the more or less incoherent and spiritually insignificant, we would go even as far as to say unintelligible character of the forms.<sup>3</sup> In order to forestall any possible objection, we would stress the fact that in intellectually healthy civilizations—the Christian civilization of the Middle Ages for instance—spirituality often affirms itself by a marked indifference to forms, and sometimes even reveals a tendency to turn away from them, as is shown by the example of St. Bernard condemning images in monasteries, which, it must be said, in no wise signifies the acceptance of ugliness and barbarism, any more than poverty means the possession of many ignoble things; but in a world where traditional art is dead, where consequently form itself is invaded by

everything which is contrary to spirituality, where nearly every formal expression is corrupted at its very roots, the traditional regularity of forms takes on a very special spiritual importance which it could not have possessed at the beginning, since the absence of the spirit in forms was then a non-existent and inconceivable thing.

What we have said concerning the intellectual quality of sensible forms must not make us lose sight of the fact that the further one goes back to the origins of a given Tradition, the less those forms appear in a state of full development; the pseudo-form, that is to say an arbitrary form, is always excluded, as already stated, but form such as it is, can also be well-nigh absent, at least in certain more or less peripheral domains; on the other hand, the nearer one draws to the end of the traditional cycle under consideration, the greater the importance attaching to "formalism"<sup>4</sup> even from the so-called "artistic" point of view, since the forms have by then become almost indispensable channels for the actualisation of the spiritual deposit of the tradition. What should never be forgotten is the fact that the absence of the formal element is not equivalent to the presence of the unformed, and vice-versa; the unformed and the barbarous will never attain the majestic beauty of the void, whatever may be believed by certain persons who wish to pass off a deficiency for a superiority.<sup>5</sup> This law of compensation, in virtue of which certain relations of proportion are subjected to a more or less acknowledged inversion, as between the beginning and the end of a traditional cycle, can be applied in all spheres: for instance, we may quote the following saying (*hadith*) of the Prophet Mohammed: "In the beginning of Islam, he who omits a tenth of the Law is damned; but in the latter days, he who shall accomplish a tenth thereof will be saved."

The analogical relationship between intellections and material forms explains how it became possible for esoterism to be grafted on to the exercise of trades and especially architectural art; the cathedrals which the Christian initiates left behind them offer the most explicit as well as the most dazzling proof of the spiritual exaltation of the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> This is a most important aspect of the question now before us: the action of esoterism over exoterism through the medium of sensible forms, the production of which is precisely the prerogative of craft initiation; through these forms, real vehicles, as they are, of the integral traditional doctrine, and which thanks to their symbolism translate this doctrine into a language that is both immediate and universal, esoterism infuses an intellectual quality into the properly religious part of the Tradition, thereby establishing a balance the absence of which would finally bring about the dissolution of the whole civilization, as has happened in the Christian world. The abandoning of sacred art deprived esoterism of its most direct means of action, exteriorised tradition insisted more and more on its own peculiarities, that is to say, its limitations, until finally, by want of that current of universality which, through the language of forms, had quickened and stabilized the religious civilization, reactions in a contrary sense were brought about; that is to say, the formal limitations, instead of being compensated and thereby stabilized by means of the supra-formal "interferences" of esoterism, gave rise, through their "opacity" or "massiveness," to negations which might be qualified as "infra-formal," resulting as they did from individual arbitrariness which, far from being a form of the truth, is but a formless chaos of opinions and fancies.

To return to our initial idea, we will add that the "Beauty" of God corresponds to a deeper reality than His "Goodness," no matter how paradoxical this may appear at first sight; one has only to recall the metaphysical law in virtue of which the analogy between the principal and manifested orders is reversed, in the sense that what is principally

"great" will be "small" in the manifested, and that which is "inward" in the Principle will appear as "outward" in manifestation, and vice versa; it is because of this inverse analogy that in man beauty is outward and goodness inward—at least in the usual sense of these words—contrary to what takes place in the principial order where Goodness is itself an expression of Beauty.

## II

It has often been a matter of surprise that Oriental peoples, including those reputed to be the most artistic, show themselves for the most part entirely lacking in aesthetical discernment with regard to whatever comes to them from the West; all the ugliness born of a world more and more devoid of spirituality spreads over the East with unbelievable facility, not only under the influence of politico-economic factors, which would not be so surprising, but especially by the free consent of those who, by all appearances, had created a world of beauty, that is a civilization, in which every expression, including the most modest, bore the imprint of a like genius. Since the very beginning of Western infiltration, it has been astonishing to see the most perfect works of art set side by side with the worst trivialities of industrial production, and these disconcerting contradictions have taken place not only in the realm of "art products," but nearly everywhere, always having regard to the fact that in a normal civilization, everything accomplished by man is related to the domain of art, in some respects at least. The answer to this paradox is very simple, however, and we have already outlined it in the preceding pages: it is precisely the fact that forms, even up to the most unimportant, are the work of human hands in a secondary manner only; they originate first and foremost from the same supra-human source from which all tradition originates, which is another way of saying that the artist who lives in a traditional world devoid of "rifts," works under the discipline or the inspiration of a genius which surpasses him; as a matter of fact, he is but the instrument of this genius, if only from the simple fact of his craftsman's qualification.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, individual taste, in the production of the forms of such an art, plays only a relatively subordinate part,<sup>8</sup> and this taste will even amount to nothing as soon as the individual finds himself face to face with a form which is foreign to the spirit of his own tradition; that is what happens in the case of people unfamiliar with Western civilization when they encounter the forms imported from the West. However, for this to happen, it is necessary that the people accepting such a confusion should no longer be fully conscious of its own spiritual genius, or in other terms, that it should no longer be capable of understanding the forms with which it is still surrounded and in which it lives; it is in fact a proof that the people in question is already suffering from a certain decadence; because of this fact, it is led to accept the modern horrors all the more easily because they may answer to certain inferior possibilities that those people are already spontaneously seeking to realize, no matter how, and it may well be quite subconsciously; therefore, the unreasoning readiness with which only too many Orientals (or possibly even the great majority) accept things which are utterly incompatible with the spirit of their tradition, is best explained by the fascination exercised over an ordinary person by something corresponding to an as yet unexhausted possibility, this possibility being, in the present case, simply that of arbitrariness or want of principles. But even without wishing to give too general a scope to this explanation of what appears to be the complete lack of taste shown by Orientals, there is one fact which is absolutely certain,

namely that, as stated above, very many Orientals themselves no longer understand the sense of the forms they inherited from their ancestors, together with their whole tradition. All that we have said applies of course first and foremost and *a fortiori* to the nations of the West themselves who, after having created—we will not say “invented”—a perfect traditional art, then proceeded to disown it in favour of the residues of the individualistic and empty art of the Graeco-Romans, which has finally led to the artistic chaos of the modern world. We know very well that there are some who will not at any price admit the unintelligibility or the ugliness of the modern world, and who readily pronounce the word “aesthetic” with a depreciative accent approaching that which attaches to the words “picturesque” and “romantic,” for they wish to discredit in advance the importance of forms, so that they may find themselves more at ease in the enclosed system of their own barbarism; such an attitude has nothing surprising in it when it concerns proved modernists, but it is worse than illogical, not to say rather base, coming from those who claim to belong to Christian civilization; for to reduce the spontaneous and normal language of Christian art—a language the beauty of which is hardly open to question—to a worldly matter of “taste,”—as if mediaeval art could have been the product of a simple caprice—amounts to admitting that the signs stamped by the genius of Christianity on all its direct and indirect expressions were only a contingency unrelated to that genius and devoid of serious importance, or even due to a mental inferiority; for “only the spirit matters”—so say certain ignorant people imbued with hypocritical, iconoclastic, blasphemous and impotent puritanism, who pronounce the word “spirit” all the more readily because they are the last to know what it really stands for.

In order to understand the causes of the decadence of Art in the West, one must take into account the fact that there is, in the European mentality, a certain dangerous “idealism” which is not without relevance to that decadence, nor yet to the decay of Western civilization as a whole; this “idealism” has found its fullest, one might say its most “intelligent” expression in certain forms of Gothic art, those in which a kind of “dynamism” is predominant such as seems to be aiming at taking away its heaviness from stone; as for Byzantine and Romanesque art, as well as that other side of Gothic art wherein a “static” power has been preserved, it might be said that it is an essentially intellectual art, therefore “realistic.” The “flamboyant” Gothic art, no matter how “passionate” it became, was nevertheless still a traditional art,—with the exception of sculpture and painting which were already well on the way to decadence,—or more exactly, it was the “swan-song” of Gothic; from the outset of the Renaissance, which itself represents a sort of “posthumous revenge” on the part of classical antiquity, European “idealism” flowed into the exhumed sarcophagi of Graeco-Roman civilization; by this act of suicide, idealism placed itself at the service of an individualism in which it thought to have rediscovered its own genius, only to end up, after a number of stages, in the most vulgar and wildest affirmations of that individualism.<sup>9</sup> As to what the West finds “gross” in other civilizations, they are nearly always only the more or less superficial aspects of a “realism” that scorns delusive and hypocritical veils; however, one should not lose sight of the fact that “idealism” is not bad in itself, inasmuch as it finds its place in the mind of the hero, always inclined towards “sublimation”; what is bad, and at the same time specifically Western, is the intrusion of this mentality into every sphere, including those to which it should remain a stranger. It is this distorted “idealism,” all the more fragile and



### CONCERNING FORMS IN ART

dangerous because it is distorted, that Islam, with its desire for equilibrium and stability, —in other words "realism"—wished to avoid at all costs, having taken, moreover, into consideration the restricted possibilities of the present cyclic period, already far removed from origins; herein lies the reason for that "earthly" aspect with which Christians like to tax the Islamic civilization.

### III

The majority of moderns are almost prepared to believe that Byzantine or Romanesque art is in no wise superior to modern art, and that a Byzantine or Romanesque Virgin resembles Mary no more than do her naturalistic images, in fact rather the contrary. The answer is, however, quite simple: the Byzantine Virgin—which traditionally goes back to Saint Luke and the Angels—approaches far closer to the "truth" of Mary than a naturalistic image, which is necessarily that of another woman. Only one of two things is possible: either the artist presents an absolutely correct portrait of the Virgin from a physical point of view, in which case it will be necessary for the artist to have seen the Virgin, a condition which evidently cannot be fulfilled—leaving aside the fact that all naturalistic painting is an abuse—or else the artist will present a perfectly adequate symbol of the Virgin, but in this case physical resemblance, without being absolutely excluded, is no longer a question worth consideration.<sup>10</sup> It is this second solution—the only one that makes sense—which is realized in icons; what they do not express by means of a physical resemblance, they express by the abstract but immediate language of symbolism, a language which is built up of precision and imponderables both together; thus the icon, in addition to the beatific power which is inherent in it by reason of its sacramental character, transmits the holiness or interior reality of the Virgin, and hence the universal reality of which the Virgin herself is an expression; the icon, in contributing both to a state of contemplation and to a metaphysical reality, becomes a support of intellection, while a naturalistic image transmits only the fact—apart from its evident and inevitable lie—that Mary was a woman. One's capability of perceiving the spiritual quality of an icon or any other symbol is a question of contemplative intelligence; however, it is certainly false to pretend that a people needs an "accessible," that is to say a "flat" art, for it is not the "people" which gave birth to the Renaissance; the art of the latter, like all the "fine art" which is derived from it, is on the contrary an offence to the piety of the simple person; the artistic ideals of the Renaissance and of all modern art are therefore very far removed from what the people need, and as a matter of fact, nearly all the miraculous Virgins to which people are attracted are Byzantine or Romanesque; and who would dare to maintain that the black colouring of some of them agrees with popular taste or is particularly accessible to it? On the other hand, the Virgins made by the hands of the people, when they are not corrupted by the influence of academic art, are very much more "real," even in a subjective way, than those of the latter; and even if one admitted that the majority need empty or unintelligent images, can it be said that the needs of the elect are never to be taken into consideration?

In the preceding paragraphs, we have already replied implicitly to the question of knowing whether sacred art is meant to cater for the intellectual elect alone, or whether it has something to offer to the man of average intelligence; this question solves itself when one takes into consideration the universality of every symbol, from which it follows that

sacred art does not merely transmit—apart from metaphysical truths and facts derived from sacred history—spiritual states of the mind, but psychological attitudes which are accessible to all men; in modern language, one might say that such art is both deep and “naive” at the same time; such a combination of profundity and “naivety” is precisely one of the dominant characteristics of sacred art. This “ingenuity” or “candour”, far from being due to a spontaneous or affected inferiority, reveals on the contrary the normal state of the human soul, whether it be that of the average or of the above-average man; the apparent “intelligence” of naturalism, on the other hand, that is to say, its well nigh satanic skill in copying Nature and thus transmitting nothing but the hollow shell of beings and things, can only correspond to a deformed mentality, we might say one which has deviated from primordial simplicity or “innocence;” it goes without saying that such a deformation, resulting as it does from intellectual superficiality and mental virtuosity, is incompatible with the traditional spirit and consequently finds no place in a civilization that has remained faithful to that spirit. Therefore if sacred art appeals to contemplative intelligence, it likewise appeals to normal human sensibility; this means that such art alone possesses a universal language, and that none is better fitted to appeal, not only to an elect, but also to the people at large. Let us remember, too, as far as the apparently “childish” aspect of the traditional mentality is concerned, Christ’s injunctions to be “as little children” and “simple as doves,” words which, no matter what may be their spiritual meaning, also quite plainly refer to psychological realities.

The monks of the VIIIth century, very different from those religious authorities of the XVth and XVIth centuries who betrayed Christian art by abandoning it to the impure passions of worldly men and the ignorant imagination of the profane, were fully conscious of the holiness of every kind of means able to express the Tradition; they stipulated, at the second council of Nicaea, that “art” (i.e. “the perfection of work”) alone belongs to the painter, while ordinance (the choice of the subject) and disposition (the treatment of the subject from the symbolical as well as the technical or material points of view) belongs to the Fathers.” (*Non est pictoris—ejus enim ars est—verum ordinatio et dispositio Patrum nostrorum.*) This amounts to placing all artistic initiative under the direct and active authority of the spiritual leaders of Christianity. Such being the case, how can one explain that religious circles have for the most part shown, during recent centuries, such a regrettable lack of understanding in respect of all those things which, having an artistic character, are, as they fondly believe, only external matters? First of all, admitting *a priori* the elimination of every esoteric influence, there is the fact that a religious perspective as such has a tendency to identify itself with the moral point of view, which stresses merit only and believes it is necessary to ignore the sanctifying quality of intellectual knowledge and, as a result, the value of the supports of such knowledge; now, the perfection of sensible forms is no more “meritorious” in the moral sense than the intellections which those forms reflect and transmit, and it is therefore only logical that symbolic forms, when they are no longer understood, should be relegated to the background, and even forsaken, in order to be replaced by forms which will no longer appeal to the intelligence, but only to a sentimental imagination capable of inspiring the meritorious act—at least such is the belief of the man of limited intelligence. However, this way of speculating on reactions to be provoked by resorting to means of a superficial and vulgar character will, in a last analysis, prove to be illusory, for in reality, nothing can be better fitted to influence the deeper dispositions of the soul than sacred

art ; profane art, on the contrary, even if it be of some psychological value in the case of souls of inferior intelligence, soon exhausts its means, by the very fact of their superficiality and vulgarity, after which it can only provoke reactions of contempt ; these are only too common, and may be considered as a " rebound " of the contempt in which sacred art was held by profane art, especially in the beginning.<sup>11</sup> It has been a matter of current experience that nothing is able to offer to irreligion a more immediately tangible nourishment than the insipid hypocrisy of religious images ; that which was meant to stimulate piety in the believer, but serves to confirm unbelievers in their impiety, whereas it must be recognized that genuinely sacred art does not have this character of a " two-edged weapon," for being itself more abstract, it offers less hold to hostile psychological reactions. Now, no matter what may be the theories that attribute to the people the need for unintelligent images, warped in their essence, the elects do, after all, exist and certainly require something different ; what they demand is an art corresponding to their own spirit and in which their soul can come to rest, finding itself again in order to mount to the Divine ; such an art cannot spring simply from profane taste, nor even from " genius", but must proceed essentially out of tradition ; this fact being admitted, the masterpiece must be executed by a sanctified artist or, let us say, by one " in a state of grace."<sup>12</sup> Far from serving only for the more or less superficial instruction and edification of the masses, the icon, as is the case with the Hindu *yantra* and all other visible symbols, established a bridge from the sensible to the spiritual : " By the visible aspect," states St. John Damascenus, " our thoughts must be drawn up in a spiritual flight and rise to the invisible majesty of God."

But let us return to the errors of naturalism. Art, as soon as it is no longer determined, illuminated and guided by spirituality, lies at the mercy of the individual and purely psychical resources of the artists, and these resources must soon run out, if only because of the very platitude of the naturalistic principle which calls only for a superficial tracing of Nature. Reaching the dead-point of its own platitude, naturalism inevitably engendered the monstrosities of " surrealism " ; the latter is but the decomposing body of an art, and in any case should rather be called " infra-realism " ; it is properly speaking the satanic consequence of naturalistic luciferism. Naturalism, as a matter of fact, is clearly luciferian in its wish to imitate the creations of God, not to mention its affirmation of the psychical element to the detriment of the spiritual, of the individual to the detriment of the universal, of the bare fact to the detriment of the symbol. Normally, man must imitate the creative act, not the thing created ; that is what is done by symbolic art, and the results are " creations " which are not would-be duplications of those of God, but rather a reflection of them according to a real analogy, revealing the transcendental aspects of things ; and this revelation is the only sufficient reason of art, apart from any practical uses such and such objects may serve. There is here a metaphysical inversion of relation which we have already pointed out : for God, His creature is a reflection or an " exteriorized " aspect of Himself ; for the artist, on the contrary, the work is a reflection of an " interior " reality of which he himself is only an exterior aspect ; God creates His own image, while man, so to speak fashions his own essence, at least symbolically ; on the principal plane, the inner manifests the outer, but on the manifested plane, the outer fashions the inner, and a sufficient reason for all traditional art, no matter of what kind, is the fact that in a certain sense the masterpiece is greater than the artist himself<sup>13</sup> and brings back the latter, through the mystery of artistic creation, to the proximity of his own divine Essence.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Art," said Saint Thomas Aquinas, "is associated with knowledge." As for the metaphysical theory of inverse analogy, we would refer the reader to the doctrinal works of René Guénon, especially to "*L'homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*" (Man and his Becoming according to the Vedānta, Luzac, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> René Guénon (*Les deux nuits*—The Two Nights, in *Études Traditionnelles*, Paris, Chacornac, April and May, 1939) in speaking of the *laylat al-qadr*, night of the 'descent' (*tanzil*) of the Qoran, points out that "this night, according to Mohyiddin ibn Arabi's commentary, is identified with the very body of the Prophet. What is particularly important to note is the fact that the 'revelation' is received, not in the mind, but in the body of the being who is commissioned to express the Principle: "And the Word was made flesh" says the Gospel ("flesh" and not "mind") and this is precisely another way of expressing, under the form proper to Christian Tradition, that which is represented by the *laylatul-qadr* in the Islamic Tradition." This truth is closely bound up with the relation mentioned as existing between forms and intellects.

<sup>3</sup> We are referring here to the decadence of certain branches of religious art during the Gothic period, especially in its latter part, and Western art as a whole from the Renaissance onward: Christian art (architecture, sculpture, painting, liturgical goldsmithry, etc.), which formerly was sacred, symbolical, spiritual, had to give way before the invasion of neo-antique and naturalistic, individualistic and sentimental art; this art, which contained absolutely nothing "miraculous"—no matter what those who believe in the "greek miracle" may care to think—is quite unfitted for the transmission of intellectual intuitions and no longer even answers to collective psychical aspirations; it is thus as far removed as can be from intellectual contemplation and takes into consideration feelings only; on the other hand, feeling lowers itself in proportion as it fulfils the needs of the masses, until it finishes up in a sickly and pathetic vulgarity. It is strange that no one has understood to what a degree this barbarism of forms, which reached a zenith of empty and miserable exhibitionism in the period of Louis XV, contributed—and still contributes—to drawing many souls (and by no means the worst) away from the Church; they feel literally choked in surroundings which do not allow their intelligence room to breathe.—Let us note in passing that the historical connection between the new St. Peter's Basilica in Rome—of the Renaissance period, therefore anti-spiritual and rhetorical, "human" if preferred—and the origin of the Reformation are unfortunately very far from fortuitous.

<sup>4</sup> This point is one that is ignored by certain pseudo-Hindu movements, whether of Indian origin or not, which move away from the sacred forms of Hinduism all the while believing themselves to represent its purest essence; in reality, it is useless to confer a spiritual means on a man, without having first of all forged in him a mentality which will be in harmony with this means, and that quite independently of the obligation of a personal attachment to an initiatic line; a spiritual realisation is inconceivable outside the appropriate psychic "climate," that is to say, one that is in conformity with the traditional surroundings of the spiritual means in question. We may perhaps be allowed to add a remark here which seems to take us rather outside our subject, though some readers, at least, will understand its appropriateness: an objection might be raised to what we have just been saying, that Shri Chaitanya bestowed initiation not only on Hindus but on Moslems as well; this objection, however, is pointless in the present case, for what Shri Chaitanya, who was one of the greatest spiritual masters in India, transmitted first and foremost, was a current of grace resulting from the intense radiation of his own holiness; this radiation had the virtue of erasing or drowning in some way the formal differences, as is all the more admissible in that he was "bhaktic" by nature. Besides, the fact that Shri Chaitanya could accomplish miracles in no wise implies that another *guru*, even if he were of the same initiatory lineage and therefore a legitimate successor of Chaitanya, could do the same; from another point of view which, though less important, is by no means negligible, one must also take into consideration the psychic and other affinities which may exist between Hindu and Moslem Indians, especially in the case of contemplatives, so that the formal divergences can *a priori* be greatly attenuated in certain cases.

<sup>5</sup> Certain people are inclined to claim that Christianity, on the ground that it stands above forms, cannot be identified with any determined civilization; it is understandable that some people would like to find consolation for the loss of Christian civilization, including its art, but the opinion we have just quoted is none the less inexcusable. The recent new ecclesiastical canon concerning the laws of sacred art really has only a negative bearing, in the sense that it maintains a minimum of tradition simply in order to avoid seeing forms become so imaginative that the identification of their subjects is no longer possible; in other words, all that can be expected from this canon, is that the faithful may be saved from taking a church steeple for a factory-chimney, and vice-versa. Apart from that, the aforesaid canon sanctions all the errors of the past when it declares that religious art must "speak the language of its period," without even pausing to put the question of just what "a period" means, and what rights it possesses, given that it does possess any; such a principle, in the name of which men have gone as far as to proclaim that "modern ecclesiastical art is searching for a new style," implicitly contains another misunderstanding and a fresh repudiation of Christian art.

<sup>6</sup> When standing before a cathedral, a person really feels he is placed in the centre of the world; standing before a church of the Renaissance, Baroque or Rococo periods, he merely feels himself to be in Europe.

<sup>7</sup> "A thing is not only what it is for the senses, but also what it represents. Natural or artificial objects are not . . . arbitrary 'symbols' of such or such a different or superior reality; but they are . . . the effective manifestation of that reality: the eagle or the lion, for example, is not so much the symbol or the image of the Sun as it is the Sun under one of its manifestations (the essential form being more important than the nature in which it manifests itself); in the same way, every house is the world in effigy and every altar is situated at the centre of the earth . . ." (Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: "Primitive Mentality" in *Études Traditionnelles*, Paris, Chacornac, August-September-October, 1939). It is solely and exclusively traditional art—in the widest sense of the word, implying all that is of an externally formal order, and therefore *a fortiori* everything which belongs in some way or other to the ritual domain—it is only this art, transmitted with tradition and by tradition, which can guarantee the adequate analogical correspondence between the divine and the cosmic orders on the one hand, and the human or "artistic" order on the other. As a result, the traditional artist does not limit himself simply to imitating Nature, but to "imitating Nature in her

## CONCERNING FORMS IN ART

manner of operation" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* I qu. 117 a.1) and it goes without saying that the artist cannot, with his own individual means, improvise such a "cosmological" operation. It is by the entirely adequate conformity of the artist to this "manner of operation," a conformity which is subordinated to the rules of tradition, that the masterpiece is created; in other words, this conformity essentially presupposes a knowledge, which may be either personal, direct and active, or inherited, indirect and passive, the latter case being that of those artisans who, unconscious as individuals of the metaphysical contents of the forms they have learned to create, know not how to resist the corrosive influence of the modern West.

\* In order to give an idea of the principles of traditional art, we will point out a few of the most general and elementary ones: first of all, the work executed must conform to the use to which it will be put, and it must translate that conformity; if there be an added symbolism, it must be in conformity to the symbolism inherent in the object; there must be no conflict between the essential and the accessory, but hierarchical harmony, a result which, moreover, springs from the purity of the symbolism; the treatment of the material used must be in conformity with the nature of that material, in the same way that the material itself must be used in conformity with the use of the object; finally, the object must not give an illusion of being other than what it really is, for such an illusion always gives a disagreeable impression of uselessness, and when it becomes the primary object of the finished work, as in the case of all "classicist" art, it is the mark of a uselessness which is only too apparent. The great innovations of naturalistic art can be reduced in fact to as many violations of the principles of normal art: firstly, as far as sculpture is concerned, violation of the inert material used, whether it be stone, metal or wood, and secondly, in the case of painting, violation of the plane surface; in the first example, the inert material is treated as if it were endowed with life, whereas it is essentially static and only allows, because of this fact, the representation either of motionless bodies or of essential or "schematic" phases of movement, but not that of arbitrary, accidental or almost instantaneous movements; in the second example, that of painting, the plane surface is treated as if it had three dimensions, and that by means of foreshortening as well as shadows. The fact that naturalistic art has sometimes succeeded in expressing nobility of feeling or vigorous intelligence (as in the case of Donatello, for example), is really not in question and it can be explained by cosmological reasons which could not but exist; but this observation is totally independent of art as such and, as a matter of fact, no individual value could ever make up for the falsifying of the latter.

\* There has been in this case, a double suicide, firstly the forsaking of mediaeval or Christian art, and secondly the adoption of Graeco-Roman forms; by adopting them the Christian world became intoxicated with the poison of their decadence.

A reply should be given here to a possible objection: was not the art of the first Christians actually Roman art? The answer is that the real beginnings of Christian art are to be found in the symbols inscribed in the catacombs, and not in the forms that the early Christians, themselves partly of Roman civilization, had temporarily borrowed in quite an external way from the "classical" decadence; but Christianity was called upon to replace this decadence by an art which had spontaneously emerged from an original spiritual genius; and as a matter of fact, if certain Roman influences have always persisted in Christian art, that was, nevertheless, only in its more or less superficial details.

<sup>10</sup> We mean to say that it might even happen that, on such or such an icon, the proportions and forms of the features were really the same as those of the living Virgin, but such a likeness, if it really came to pass, would be independent of the symbolism of the image, and could only be the result of a particular inspiration, no doubt unconscious, on the part of the artist himself; it is not impossible that such may be the case with the Black Virgin of Czenstochowa, unless it actually be the work of the Evangelist Saint Luke himself, and miraculously preserved. Naturalistic art could, on the other hand, be legitimate up to a certain point if it served exclusively to set on record the features of the saints, since the contemplation of saints (the *darshan* of the Hindus) can be a very precious help in spiritual progress, because of the fact that the outward appearance of the saints conveys, as it were, the perfume of their spirituality; but such a controlled use of naturalism, which is both restricted and "disciplined" at the same time, corresponds only to a very remote possibility.

<sup>11</sup> In the same way, the hostility of the exoterists for all that lies beyond their comprehension results in a more and more "massive" exoterism which cannot but suffer from "rifts"; but the "spiritual porousness" of tradition—that is to say the immanence in the "substance" of exoterism of a transcendental "dimension" which makes up for its "massiveness,"—this state of "porousness" having been lost, the above-mentioned "rifts" could only be produced from below; it is the substitution for the masters of mediaeval esoterism of the protagonists of modern unbelief.

<sup>12</sup> The icon-painters were monks who, before setting to work, prepared themselves by fasting, prayer, confession and communion; it even happened that the colours were mixed with holy water and the dust from relics, as would not have been possible had the icon not possessed a really sacramental character.

<sup>13</sup> This it is which allows one to understand the danger that lay, in the case of Semitic peoples, in the painting and especially in the carving of living things; where the Hindu and the inhabitant of the Far East adores a divine reality through a symbol—and we know that a symbol is truly what it symbolizes as far as its essential reality is concerned—the Semite will display a tendency to deify the symbol itself; one of the reasons of the prohibition of plastic and pictorial arts amongst the Semitic peoples was certainly a wish to prevent naturalistic deviations, a very real danger among men whose mentality demanded a tradition religious in form.

## THE BIRTH OF VENUS: AN ESSAY ON COLOURS

BY LUC BENOIST (FRANCE)

THE mathematical foundation of works of art, the laws of rhythm and proportion, have all been the subject—of study. Studies have also been made of the spiritual symbolism of works of art, and of the religious signification of temples, statues and cathedrals. Very much less attention has been paid, however, to the colours of painting, except perhaps to their literal symbolism. In their relation with art and with life they have been neglected. The captivating delight the painter produces with his palette is disdained by the intellectuals, although it has its roots in the mystery of creation and instinct. Colour, in all normal men, is more immediately felt than form is perceived. Colour is distinguishable at a distance at which all form is lost. The splash of colour is felt before the outline is apprehended. It produces a physiological shock which is prolonged into emotion. The yellow and red rays of the spectrum are known to increase the pulsations of the heart, while the blue and green diminish them; hence the restful effect of the countryside.

Light, this transcendental “*forma substantialis*” of the sub-lunar world, never comes to us pure and direct, but always refracted by the prism of things, as though by a mirror which divides and colours it. The obscurity of matter absorbs this flashing illumination in proportion to its needs, and the radiation from an object is in proportion to the amount of heat which it retains to feed its own life. Pure light, at once heat and dryness, corresponds in all traditions to the element fire. By reflection, fire is polarised in its complementary the element water, which synthesizes coldness and humidity. Water united with fire and vapourized by it, produces the element earth, the most plastic of all.

While the arabesque expresses most perfectly what Walter Pater called “dry beauty,” the image of a pure intellectual vibration, colour follows what the alchemist called the “*via humida*,” which expresses the emotional and vegetative aspect of things.

Drawing was practised by artists of an intellectual disposition, such as Holbein, Ingres and Degas. Values which render atmosphere held the attention of artists in whom the psychic element was dominant, Rembrandt, Leonardo or Carriere. As to the subtleties of colours themselves, these have been the main interest of true “artists” such as Titian, Rubens or Van Gogh, who, without being any less intellectual than the former, were, however, primarily preoccupied with the cosmic aspect of creation, using colour to render the tactile quality of the work of art. Certainly they were the most purely painters.

A picture, to be complete, should give us the illusion of a world in miniature, with its atmosphere pervaded by water. Here we touch upon the myth of terrestrial creation. Across the muddy obscurity of primordial chaos, light is manifested like a victory of the spirit, which creates intelligible forms. In the same way, a true picture should make us see first the earth “still without form and sodden from the flood.” It is only on this enriching foundation that the intellectual character of form can take life. In the darkness of this ground it will prepare the way for the expression of the wonders of colour. A true picture is primarily an atmosphere teeming with things, the nature of which need



## THE BIRTH OF VENUS

not be immediately recognizable in order to please. It is stirring by virtue of an ambience which can almost be savoured. It seems as if we are plunged into an atmosphere as stimulating to the nose and palate as to the eye. And it is well-known that water is as important to touch as to taste. The voluptuous mandarins of ancient China were wont to moisten delicately the tips of their fingers to caress their jade with more exquisite pleasure.

In the history of painting, all the great schools of colourists have been born in countries of mist, where land and water meet, Holland, Venice, and Brittany, and on the river banks of Ile-de-France. The countries of the sun have given birth to artists in love with line, "geometricians," the Greeks, the Florentines, the Arabs. At the same time, rhythm, the refracted transformation through things of the primordial luminous vibration, should not be absent from colour, and since all measure implies the geometry of space, the problem of the rhythm of colours can be solved only in terms of proportion.

Rubens, in a book on colours—unfortunately lost—points out that, in a picture, the parts where light and shade reign and colour plays a much reduced role, should not exceed one third of the painted surface, the other two thirds being reserved for colour, that is to say to the whole prism of half tones, broken up and reflected.

No less important are the relations of colours one to another. White light is broken up, as we know, into a rainbow of six coloured bands—three primary and three composite—which are complementary two by two. Two complementary colours will reconstitute the original light, and will enhance each other by juxtaposition. It will be well, therefore, for the painter to choose a colour-dominant composed unequally of two complementary colours.

The colours of things, being always broken-up, tend either towards red or towards blue, that is to say to become either warm or cold. To balance the rhythm of these tones, it is necessary to harmonise a warm dominant with a cold complementary, or vice versa.

Thus, even with regard to the palette, there is a rhythm to be known and observed, no less than the law of the non-mingling of themes, a law also applicable to colours. These are the harmonic correspondences which made Cézanne formulate his famous axiom: "*Quand la couleur a sa richesse, la forme a sa plénitude.*"

It cannot be denied that inasmuch as atmosphere and colour are dominant on a canvas—and for my part I believe that this is the particular characteristic of painting—rhythm falls to a level which no longer moves the spectator except through his unconscious mind. The colour is enhanced and invades the shade, movement is stilled, a vegetable immobility takes its place, form becomes blurred and is lost. A picture which expressed visual impression to the limit of perception, which would, for example, express less than the "*Nymphéas*" of Monet, would no longer have any more form or significance than a smudge on a wet wall. It could perhaps be a work to delight the senses, but would it still be a work of art? Can one give this name to that which lies on the far side of the threshold of clear consciousness?

In direct opposition to this sub-oceanic world, lies in splendour the intellectual interplay of pure contour and abstract line, child of the rhythm of light. With this arabesque springs the beauty of form. The more simple the rhythm, the more intelligible the form. The naked abstraction of a work of art acts like the silence in which one savours in its purity the exquisite dissonance of a melody. With the minimum of matter, the maximum of art. Plastic rhythm knows probably no finer testimony than a simple drawing in line or wash. It becomes like writing in allowing expression to the symbol,



## ART AND THOUGHT

supreme utterance of the mind. In the uncreated light, which he is unable to face, man marks the shadow of his act with the hieroglyphic of a thought.

Nothing better illustrates this adventure of man than the myth of the birth of Venus. The beauty of Nature, still enfathomed in the abyss of chaos, comes forth from the waves in the first light of dawn. It is She, the daughter of the day, Aphrodite Anadyomene, the Emergent! The shaft of the nascent light separates the clouds from the shadowy waters. Venus, cradled by the waves, is carried in a shell to the terrestrial shore. The shell in its design retains the primordial rhythm: in its pattern the geometricians have discovered the curve of life itself.

The mist lifts, the clouds dissolve. The goddess wrings her golden hair, still wet with the briny spray. The Hours bring her crown, the Graces her girdle, so that she may begin the round of her celestial ascension.

Thus the heart of man, which opens to understanding, rises gradually to a possession of the world more detached and more serene. From nutrition and the sense of smell, man passes to taste and touch, from Aphrodite Pandemos to vision, discarding more and more the objects he has coveted. At the same time the realm of beauty becomes purer and more embracing.

With eyes open, in the light, he attains the summit where dwell together the visible and the intelligible. Then has beauty put between herself and us sufficient distance to justify the majesty of her cult and the tension of our desire. This intangible margin, as little bearable as total silence or an endless desert, man has filled with a solitary song, with the pathos of a symphony of a rhythm of colonnades. But the finished work cheats us, and yet still holds us. The girdle which Aphrodite has thrown like a rainbow bridge spans between ourselves and the Infinite. The rhythm of the Hours draws us away from a union, so made impossible. Anadyomene has become Aphrodite Urania. The iridescent spray dissolves and disappears in the light of day.

# PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF TRADITIONAL ART

By TITUS BURCKHARDT

## I

IN the following considerations, we start from the fundamental idea that every craft can be a support for spiritual realisation, the reason lying in its symbolism, which expresses, in the terrestrial plane, a determinate universal function ; in other words, the art or the craft—which traditionally are one—should correspond symbolically to a divine activity and be thereby attached to the angel which is the cosmic agent of this activity, as is explicitly formulated in the following passage of the *Aitareya-Brâhmana*<sup>1</sup>: "It is by the imitation of the angelic works of art<sup>2</sup> that every work of art is accomplished here, whether it be a clay elephant, an object of brass, an article of clothing, an object of gold, or a mule chariot." Thus every traditional craft reflects in its own manner the production of the world, and it is precisely because of this analogy between the cosmogonic process and spiritual realisation—which is based of necessity on a microcosmic "substance"—that the art or craft naturally lends itself as a vehicle for initiatory work.

Here we must prevent an error due to a false generalisation : if it be true that all terrestrial activity, of whatever kind, has its *raison d'être* in the corresponding universal prototype, since nothing can be detached from its transcendent principle—and from this point of view every human work is necessarily a microcosmic reflection of the production of the world—there is nevertheless a radical difference between a ritual act—that is to say an act directly determined by a celestial prototype—and non-ritual activities, such as those which predominate in modern trades. This difference is analogous to that which exists between a regular and fundamental geometrical figure, such as the circle, the equilateral triangle or the square, and the indefinite multitude of irregular figures. Geometrically regular figures, those which are "fundamental" or "central," are, in space, the most direct representations of the universal prototypes ; the difference which separates them from other equally possible spatial forms is quasi-absolute, that is to say it is as great as a difference in this domain can be, because it is of qualitative order. But it is only within a given domain of manifestation that the difference between the principle of that manifestation and what is merely derived from the principle can actually be "manifested," for, outside this limit, manifestation must either be effaced before or reduced to its principle. As these two points of view are incompatible, it would be pointless to fall back on the argument of the relativity of all manifestation in order to abolish the differences the latter implies, such as, for example, the difference between ritual and profane acts.

The ritual or "central" character of traditional crafts is moreover inseparable from the fact that they actualise immediate and necessary possibilities of human activity, and this accords with the primordial origin that traditional civilizations ascribe to them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in his work *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Here it must be remembered that the "gods" (*devas*) of Hinduism are what the religions properly so called refer to as "angels."

<sup>3</sup> In the Moslem world, most of the manual crafts are considered as deriving from Seth, the son of Adam.

The analogy between the production of the world and the method of the traditional craftsman is particularly clearly shown in the construction of temples, for every temple is an image of the cosmos, which it reflects in conformity with a determinate spiritual language; and being an image of the cosmos, it will *a fortiori* be an image of Being and of its possibilities which are so to speak "exteriorised" or "crystalised" in the cosmic edifice; according to this perspective, the immobility of the temple is a reflection of the immutability of the cosmic laws and *a fortiori* of Being. The process of the construction imitates that of the production of the world starting from the primordial chaos, and this results in a resemblance and fixed relationships between the temple and the corporeal world as a whole, which is expressed by the orientation of the edifice. But whereas the planetary world is measured by the movement of the heavenly bodies, which takes place both in time and space, in a sacred building these same measures are transposed in terms of space alone, by the determination of its directive axes; a sculptural image must also obey these same laws of transposition.<sup>4</sup>

The art of the construction of temples embraces that of sculpture, since at the time of the construction of stone temples—and particularly cathedrals—each stone was dressed on the site before laying; moreover the sculptor was before all else a stonemason, and even the architect was only the first among stonemasons, he who, by his view of the whole, knew how to indicate the correct size and shape of each piece. The formation of the cosmos starting from chaos, re-enacted in the construction of the sacred edifice, is thus repeated at a lower stage in the shaping of the rude stone, which accordingly represents the *materia prima* for the entire work.

It will assist in understanding the spiritual meaning of a craft, if we look at the implements employed. Having regard to the analogy between the craftsman's activity and the universal or angelic functions, it will be understood that the tools employed by the craftsman are images of what may be called the "macrocosmic tools"; and in this connection it may be recalled that in the symbolism of the most diverse mythologies, tools are often identified with divine attributes. This accounts for the fact that the transmission of initiation was closely connected, in craft initiations, with the bestowal on the craftsman of the tools of the craft; it may therefore be said that the tool is more than the artist, in the sense that its symbolism surpasses the individuality as such.

The tools of the sculptor, the mallet and chisel, are images of the "cosmic agents" which differentiate the primary matter, here represented by the rude stone. This complementary relationship between the chisel and the stone is necessarily found, in other forms, in most if not all of the traditional crafts; thus the plough tills the earth<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We are thinking here of the sculptural representation of living beings. The traditional artist would never dream of simply immobilising a phase in the spatial and temporal evolution of a being; what he seeks to fix is always a synthesis conforming to the static conditions of sculpture. "The great innovations of naturalist art amount to so many violations of the principles of normal art: firstly, as regards sculpture, violation of inert matter, be it stone, metal or wood, and secondly, as regards painting, violation of the plane surface; in the first case inert matter is treated as if it were endowed with life, whereas it is essentially static and, for this reason, only permits the representation either of motionless bodies or of essential or "schematic" phases of movement, and not that of arbitrary, accidental or quasi instantaneous movements . . ." (Frithjof Schuon: *La question des formes d'art in Etudes Traditionnelles*, January-February, 1946).

<sup>5</sup> The art of ploughing is often conceived as having a divine origin. Physically the act of ploughing the earth has the effect of opening it to the air, which promotes the fermentation indispensable to the assimilation of the earth by plants; symbolically the earth is opened to the influences of the heavens, of which the plough is the active agent or generative organ. It may be noted in passing that the replacement of the plough by machinery has reduced much fertile earth to sterility, or in other words has transformed it into a desert; it is an illustration of the curse inherent in machines, spoken of by René Guénon in his book *Le regne de la quantité et les signes des temps*.

as the chisel carves the stone, and it is in the same manner, principally speaking, that the pen "transforms" the paper<sup>6</sup>; the cutting or modelling instrument always appears as the agent of a male principle which determines a female matter. The chisel obviously corresponds to a faculty of distinction or discrimination; active in relation to stone, it becomes passive in its turn when viewed in its connection with the mallet to whose "impulsion" it submits. When applied to "operative" initiation, the chisel symbolises distinctive knowledge, and the mallet the spiritual will which "actualises" or "stimulates" this knowledge; the cognitive faculty is thus placed below the volitive faculty, which at first sight seems contrary to the normal hierarchy, but this apparent reversal is explained by the metaphysically necessary inversion of the principal relationship—wherein knowledge takes precedence over will—in the "practical" domain. Thus the spiritual or supra-individual element, which is by definition of a contemplative order, is manifested as a dynamic element on the plane of spiritual work, while the individual or volitive element takes, on the same plane, a contemplative form; spiritual knowledge becomes will, and the will becomes discernment; and in this connection it may be recalled that it is the right hand which wields the mallet, while the left guides the chisel. The pure principal knowledge, or if preferred "doctrinal" knowledge—of which the "discernment" in question is only the practical or "methodic" microcosmic application—does not enter "actively," or rather "directly," in the work of spiritual realisation, but regulates it in conformity with immutable truths; this transcendent knowledge is symbolised, in the spiritual method of the stonemason, by the various measuring instruments, such as the plumb-line, the level, the square and the compass, images of immutable archetypes which govern all the phases of the work.<sup>7</sup>

What we have said makes it possible to understand that the initiatory teaching given to craftsmen must have been more "visual" than "verbal" or "theoretic"; on the other hand, the practical application of fundamental geometrical data—by means of measuring instruments—must of itself have spontaneously awakened among contemplative craftsmen intellectual "intuitions" or "presentiments," hence in the final analysis metaphysical knowledge. In particular, the use of these instruments permitted the recognition, in an immediate way, of the inevitable and incorruptible rigour—or logic—of the universal laws, firstly in the "natural" order, by the observation of static laws,<sup>8</sup> and next in the "supernatural" order by the apprehension, through these laws, of their universal archetypes; this of course presupposes that "logical" laws, whilst applying *a priori* in the sensible world, were still attributed spontaneously to their true substance—cosmic or divine according to the level at which it was regarded; in other words these laws had not yet become arbitrarily enclosed in the limits of the notion of matter, to the extent of being confused with the apparent inertia of the "non-spiritual." This fundamental difference in the conception of the rules of measure is revealed moreover, in an almost tangible manner, in the difference of technical treatment in the work of traditional craftsmen and the products of modern industry: the surfaces and angles of a Romanesque

<sup>6</sup> The symbolism of the pen and the book—or the pen and the tablet—plays a very important role in Islamic traditions. In the doctrine of the Sufis, the "supreme" pen is the "Universal Intellect," and the "Guarded tablet" on which the pen engraves the destinies of the world, corresponds to the *materia prima*, the uncreated or unmanifested "substance" which, under the impulsions of the "Intellect" or "Essence," produces the whole content of the "creation."

<sup>7</sup> It can also be said that these instruments correspond to different "conceptual dimensions" (cf. Frithjof Schuon: *Des dimensions conceptuelles*, in *Etudes traditionnelles*, January, 1940).

<sup>8</sup> In mediæval science, every physical law could be related to an idea of proportion: for example, the specific weight of a body is given by the proportion between its volume and its weight. It is by these proportions that unity is affirmed in multiplicity.

church, for example, are always shown to be inexact when rigorous measurement is applied to them, but the unity of the whole imposes itself with all the more clarity ; the regularity of the edifice, as it were, escapes from mechanical control to be integrated in the intelligible. Most modern constructions, on the other hand, possess only a purely " additive " unity, whilst presenting an " inhuman "—because apparently absolute—regularity in detail, as if it were a question, not of " reproducing " the transcendent model in human mode, but of replacing it by a sort of magical copy which is in absolute conformity with it, which implies a Luciferian confusion between the material form and the ideal or " abstract " form.<sup>9</sup> Modern buildings accordingly represent a reversal of the normal relationship between essential forms and contingent ones, which results in a sort of visual inactivity incompatible with the sensibility—we might say the " initiatable substance"—of the contemplative artist.

## III

In principle the ritual elements we mentioned above would suffice for the validity of the method, the indispensable conditions of which are the following : firstly, the accomplishment of an action which symbolically reproduces a universal function, secondly, the transmission of a " spiritual influence " <sup>10</sup> which establishes—as a sort of parallel to the " essential " relation, at once ontological and logical, between the ritual act and its divine prototype—a " substantial " communication between the two planes of reality, and lastly, the right intention (the *niyah* of Islamic doctrine) which opens the soul to the " existential " flux passing from the prototype to the symbol, or in other words, the intention which permits the soul to flow into the " mould " constituted by the symbolic act. As to rites which were performed in common, such as those which are still performed for the commencement and achievement of works in speculative Masonry, they could not be directly referred to the craftsman's personal labour of realisation, but assured his participation in the spiritual influence which was present in the collective work.

What we have just said should not exclude another possibility : it appears not impossible to us that initiated craftsmen of the Middle Ages had at their disposal yet another spiritual means—of a more inward order and combining with the performance of the craft—namely, an incantatory formula, the significance of which would be related to the cosmic function reflected by the craft ; this incantation might have been a purely mental act and, in this case, although it would have been easier to keep it secret, it would also all the more easily have been lost.<sup>11</sup> A suitable opportunity for the combining of such means with those of craft symbolism may well have occurred when the guilds were integrated into the Christian tradition, and this junction may have taken place in the Holy Land. A means of this nature would have served to bridge the domains of the " lesser Mysteries " and the " greater Mysteries," in conformity with the " avataric " intervention of Christ.

All initiatory work needs to be regulated by a theoretical knowledge which anticipates realisation proper. In the case of the sculptors of the Middle Ages, whom we have particularly in view here, the theory was visibly manifested by the edifice as a whole,

<sup>9</sup> This shortcoming is carried to the extreme in constructions of iron, concrete and glass.

<sup>10</sup> On the subject of the " spiritual influence " see René Guénon : *Aperçus sur l'initiation*.

<sup>11</sup> It is still possible to find examples of incantations combined with rhythmic manual work in certain craft guilds in the Near-East.

which, in itself, reflected the cosmos or the Divine plan. Mastery, therefore, consisted in a "conscious" participation in the plan of the "Great Architect of the Universe," a plan which is in fact revealed in the synthesis of all the proportions of the temple,<sup>12</sup> and which co-ordinates the aspirations of all those who participate in the cosmic work.

It may be said, in a quite general way, that the intellectual element of the method manifested itself in the regular form to be imposed on the stone. Thus the form plays the part of "essence"; and it is doubtless because of some such artistic analogy that Aristotle identified "form," which, so to speak, summarises the qualities of a being or an object, with the immutable "idea," hence with the essential archetype of this object or being, and that he opposed *forma* and *materia* as complementaries referring respectively to the "essential" or active pole and the "substantial" or passive pole of universal manifestation.

According to the microcosmic or initiatory application, the geometrical patterns represent aspects of spiritual truth and the stone the soul of the artist; the work on the stone, which consists of removing what is superfluous and conferring a "quality" on what is as yet only brute "quantity," corresponds to the flowering of the virtues which are, in the human soul, the supports at the same time as the fruits of spiritual knowledge. This perfecting of the soul plays a role which is all the more important because the goal of the craft initiation is reintegration in the "primordial" state,<sup>13</sup> where every faculty becomes pure quality, and where the individual is ennobled, like an ordinary stone which is turned into a precious gem.

#### IV

It is in no way necessary, in view of the spiritual bearing of the work, that its form should be in any way complex, that is to say artistic in the current and superficial sense of the term; the fruition of an original work or a work of genius represents rather the spontaneous fruit of a certain inner realization than a means to achieve it.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the genius of the initiated artist manifests itself less in imaginative richness than in intuitive intelligence, and in the simplicity of the operation when it is a question of applying an "ideal" prototype to any given material and circumstances. As far as the sculpture of figures is concerned, not only the stone but also all empirical forms play the part of "matter," and it can therefore be said that the geometrical strictness of a sculpture expresses its intellectual nature, whereas the delicacy of the modelling derives from "love."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This synthesis of the proportions could be compared to a sphere, for it is by the regular division of a circle of which the centre and principle divisions were fixed at the moment of the orientation of the temple, that the proportions of the edifice were generally measured, on the horizontal plane as well as on the vertical. On the other hand the Divine Plan is nothing else than the form of the "Universal Man"—(*El-Insân el-Kamil*) in Sufi terms—the geometrical image of which is precisely a sphere.

<sup>13</sup> We remind readers that this expression, which often appears in the writings of René Guénon, signifies the Edenic state, that is, a state where all the individual faculties are found in perfect plenitude, necessarily coinciding with an inward state which is perfectly "simple" and "pure."

<sup>14</sup> In return the work of genius, far from having a purely subjective bearing for the artist, is susceptible of helping others to make contact with such spiritual realities; this is possible because the genius, thanks to the depth and richness of his talents, knows how to make these realities more intelligible and so more easily assimilated.

<sup>15</sup> The most striking example of this appears in Egyptian sculptures, the modelling of which is of unequalled delicacy and sensibility, whereas an extreme "ideal" strictness is expressed in the attitude of the bodies.

Repetition of prototypes, simplicity of process and a certain monotony of means are inseparable from the method of traditional artists. At the core of art, which is ornament and richness, such monotony safeguards poverty and childlikeness of spirit. To illustrate this attitude, which is concealed in the apparent naivete of traditional art, we quote the following conversation with a Moroccan street singer. Having asked him why his little Arab guitar—which he used to accompany the chanting of his tales—had only two strings, we received this reply: "To add a third string to the instrument would be to take the first step towards heresy. When God created Adam's soul, it did not want to enter into the body and fluttered like a bird round its cage. Then God ordered the angels to play on the two strings called 'male' and 'female' and the soul, believing that melody resides in the instrument—which is the body—entered in and remained imprisoned. For this reason two strings—which are always called 'male' and 'female'—are sufficient to free the soul from the body." This myth, which clearly indicates the angelic origin of art, shows that the process of manifestation and that of re-integration—of the manifested into the Principle—are conversely related and constitute the two phases, "descending" and "ascending," of the same cosmic rhythm. This rhythm is echoed in ritual gestures and incantations; rhythm, which unfolds in time, finds its spatial correspondence in "proportion," and this shows that there is a necessary relation between the ritual character of artistic actions and the regularity of the proportions of works of art.

Lastly we will add the following: if one refers the idea of the production of a world starting from a *materia prima*—which constitutes the immediate prototype of every artistic process—to the idea of universal manifestation, matter—and the work which results from it—will be comparable to a mirror which manifests to the creative Spirit its own latent possibilities. In the same way that a profane work of art, in so far as it actualises certain limitations of an individual order, can become a trap which closes over the artist's soul, so the sacred work of art, because it is determined by a symbol and so by a supra-individual and transcendent element, and because it is in some measure moulded by certain necessities, will be a means of knowing the "Self," that is, our transcendent and divine essence; it is in this sense that the work is "more than the artist."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "God creates His own image, whereas man so to speak fashions his own essence, at least symbolically; on the principal plane, the inner manifests the outer whereas on the manifested plane, the outer fashions the inner, and the sufficient reason of all traditional art, of whatever kind, is that the work should be in a certain sense more than the artist, bringing him back, by the mystery of artistic creation, to the proximity of his own divine essence" (Frithjof Schuon: *La question des formes d'art*, in *Etudes traditionnelles*, January-February, 1946).



## FROM ART TO SPIRITUALITY

BY JACQUES DE MARQUETTE, DR. ES LETTRES (CALIF.)

IN aesthetics, as in all other fields, India has made a great contribution to the common cultural heritage of mankind. The main problems concerning the place of art in the transcendent aspirations of the human soul which confronted Western thinkers from Plato and Plotinus to our day, have been fathomed by the ancient sages of India. The revelation of their views to Occidental thinkers has been one of the most important cultural events of the last century. The elucidation of the bearing of the problems of aesthetics on the principal aspects of metaphysics has added a very important chapter to comparative religion and philosophy. Among the "savants" who brought this particular aspect of the treasures of the East to the West, none has played a more important part than the great figure to whom this publication is dedicated.

This modest article will endeavour to summarize, in the light of Indian aesthetics, largely as interpreted by Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, the contribution Art is capable of making to the quest of those souls which are heeding the call of what Royce called the "homing instinct" of the religious heart.

To begin, our title might seem to offer a contradiction. Indicating a passage from art to religion, it implies a differentiation between these two terms. At first sight this appears to call for a rebuke. How could one oppose art to religion when the whole evolution of art forms is closely connected with that of religions?

It is a truism that in all civilizations, religion has provided art with its most numerous and important models and with its most stimulating inspirations. Nearly all the great artistic legacies of antiquity are religious relics. The temples of Persepolis, of Baalbek, of China, of Egypt, the Pyramids, the Parthenon, the Mayan pyramids, the caves of Ajanta and Ellora, Angkor, Borobudur, all are witnesses of the efforts of nations to incorporate and perpetuate their religious ideas in monuments of various kinds. Architecture and sculpture are not the only arts to owe their inspiration to religion. Painting, music, dancing, and literature also received their most important stimulants from it.

The study of primitive societies has led anthropologists to go even further and demonstrate that most art forms owed not only their inspiration but their very incipency to religious ideas. The first crude ornamentation on the erstwhile purely functional implements of the primitives was the offspring of magic. The first drawings on weapons or tools were destined to increase their efficacy by conjuring the support of totemic influences susceptible of strengthening the *mana*, the magic power of the operator. The mace became deadlier, the adze sharper, the housepole firmer when the magician, through the compelling designs he carved on their surface, had endowed them with a means of connection with and participation in the great store of magical power which was the origin of all practical efficacy. This was brought about because of the correspondence between a transcendent power and the graphic representations of its ideal form. The oldest crude paleolithic drawings found in caves were prompted by this idea of magical relations between the live principle of a being and the representation of its form. By drawing the outline of the Mammoth or Auroch before setting out on their hunting



expedition, primitive hunters performed magical operations on these images which were to cause their models to fall an easy prey to them.

It could be argued that this early magical use of decoration constitutes no proof of the religious origin of art, since many authors have asserted a fundamental opposition between magic and religion. Religion was social and global, imposed on the individual by the collective representations of his totemic group. Magic was a deliberate personal activity, perhaps the first step in the assertion of man's power as an individual distinct from his group. The priest implored the help and favour of the tribal god. The magician exercised a coercive control over the forces of nature which he compelled into co-operation.

This antagonism is more apparent than real. It is mainly artificial due to the attempt of materialistic Occidental intellectuals to ascribe a purely sociological origin to religion by ignoring or denying any other factor than the social and sensory ones. This might be true if the whole of religion was contained in its purely exterior manifestations and expressions; in the forms and activities accessible to the objective observer, however bereft he may be of any inkling of transcendent intuition. "*Ignoti nulla cupido.*"

But this purely exterior concept of religion is untenable for all those who have had even a trace of religious experience. It certainly is in direct opposition to the spiritual conception of life in which the old Vedic wisdom anticipated modern Western research by more than three thousand years.

The sacrifice was the central notion of early Vedism. Originally the sacrificial rites were conceived as exercising a direct, compelling action on the forces of nature. Later their personalization gave birth to the mythological pantheon. The appearance of Gods changed the purpose of the sacrifice. Instead of coercing nature's powers into obedience, it sought the favour of the anthropomorphized gods. Thus an operative technique turned into rogatory orison, ultimately to reach pure worship. This blending of magic and religion is illustrated by the description of the creation of the three worlds by Prajapati through the efficacy of the *mantra*. In the universe which owes its very existence to the operative powers of liturgy, beings are created, receive the "form of the name," by the magic power of the *mantra* vested in ritual formulas. Hence a complete merging of magical operation and ritual expression. This disposes of the claim of a fundamental antagonism between religion and magic.

Moreover, in considering this problem from its metaphysical aspect, which is the only justifiable one, if one is to judge religion from the standpoint of its devotees, any social antagonism between priest and witch doctor, between religion and magic is relegated to its proper place which is of a very superficial importance. Whatever their outer differences, they both rest on the fundamental notion of an intimate and immediate connection between man and the universe, that connection being in the nature of a participation in the one essence of being. It is that essential identity which makes it possible for man both to direct his thought to God in prayer, which presupposes an awareness of His being, or to exercise an influence over the modalities of His creative expression.

Hence, although its origin is rooted in magic, art can truly be said to owe religion its inspiration and models. Conversely it also plays an important part in the active expressions of most great religions. From the cathedral of Chartres to the Ghats of Benares and the temple of Nara, from the art of Fra Angelico to the abstraction of Zen drawing, runs a great current seeking to find God in the beautiful and to express man's love for Him in dedicated artistic creation striving to communicate the inner perception of the artist. Islam itself is no exception. The Taj Mahal, the Moti Masjid of Delhi, as well as

## FROM ART TO SPIRITUALITY

the poems and miniatures of the Persian Sufis are also alive with the radiant message of the nearness of the Beloved under the thin veil of forms.

Yet, if in all great religions art has been and is considered as a help to religious practice, there is also another general tendency to include it in the sweeping condemnation of all the objects of sensory dilection, looked upon as antagonistic to spiritual unfoldment and endangering the attainment of liberation. If the rituals of the various faiths use ceremonial forms endowed with aesthetic value, if the general run of devotees are wont to use beautiful icons as inspiring supports for their devotion and beautiful temples as suitable places of worship ; the spiritual spearhead of mankind, the mystics, the prophets, the seers, urged men to rise above the pluralistic attitude of the extroverted form of religion which is seeking God in an exterior discursive universe, in order to soar to Advaitist monism where any formal differentiated identification of the subject disappears in the attainment of *Mokṣa*.

Nowhere was this estrangement of the religious man from the exterior universe as strong and uncompromising as in India. In almost all its sects and philosophical groups, detachment from the world and contempt for its appearances is considered the result of a wise attitude towards life. While the *Sannyāsī* was the national hero of ancient India, even her Epicures, the materialistic Lokayatas, the despised Carvakas, practised asceticism with the idea that attachment to objects precluded their full enjoyment.

It would be an over simplification to claim that with the theory of *Māyā*, the whole cosmoconception of Hinduism rests on an absolute Idealism. Indeed the *Upaniṣads* offer a whole variety of cosmoconceptions, including Idealist Monism, Realistic Pluralism and Monadism. But irrespective of their theory of the universe, the attitude of the sages towards the world constructed by sensory experience is one of disdain. Whatever the nature of the Ultimate Reality, it is not to be found in the accounts given by the senses of the world of differentiated objects in which man is called to action, with the result of getting more and more estranged from his own reality. The world we know in our waking daily life is a fictitious story imposed upon our belief by the fabrications of the senses working on the stimuli originating in the unknown world of causes.

The world of our dreams at night is also based on the residue of the fabrications of the senses. But the dream world is superior to the world of waking inasmuch as it is less directly conditioned by the outer fount of illusion. Only in deep dreamless sleep is man completely freed from the impositions of the senses and left to unperturbed being in the pure unity of his own essence.

In the measure in which we attach importance to the fabrications constructed by the mind on the titillations of the termini of the sensory nerves, we are estranged from the direct, immediate and pure intuitions of the divine identity which lies in the core of being, as expressed by the old fundamental assertion "*Tat tvam asi*." None of the factors constituting our perception of the objects in our world of experience have any permanency. In believing in the reality of that world of passing reflections, the fleeting gleams of the jewels in the cloak of *Īśvara*, we assign ourselves to that fictitious tale spun by the instruments of our deception, the tools and filters of our consciousness. But these are a fundamental part of the equipment with which we were endowed at our birth. . . . Thus the request of the Lord's prayer "do not lead us into temptation" assumes its full significance in the light of the old wisdom of India, corroborated as it is by modern epistemology.

Works of art are part of the outer universe of opposition and limitation, the world of

*Dwandwa*. They only reach us through the sensory activity and often awaken a strong interest in the beholder. Hence they may be held to be among the factors preventing man from realizing his intrinsic unity with "The One without a second." As such art has been held to be a menace to spiritual advancement. It is true that beautiful temples and images can enthuse childish minds and that lofty music can lull into a blissful oblivion men awed by the fearsome problems of mortality. But the spiritual athlete, the asketes, must treat art as Ulysses did the chant of the Sirens. He must resist the inducement to attach importance to anything which has figure and limitation. Not in their lures, but only in the inner chamber of the heart, can the One and Only Reality be found. "The kingdom of heaven is within you."

This attitude has found many expressions in the great religions, from Moses condemning religious images to the Koran's solemn precept: "Close your eyes, O believers." In its higher form, that attitude was that of the holy Rabia of Basrah. She spent her years in contemplation in a small windowless hut. On a beautiful spring morning a devoted attendant was entreating her to come out of her cell and admire the splendour of the works of the Lord in the verdant vales covered with fragrant flowers and resounding with the happy songs of birds. She answered, "I shall not look at the beauties of creation so as not to be distracted from the contemplation of its Creator." Such was also the attitude of the Puritans. On the lower level it served as a pretext for the vandalism of the ubiquitous iconoclasts. However repellent the destructive mania of these zealots, the basic contradiction between interest in the outer objects and the inner contemplation of the Divine cannot be brushed aside lightly. If the outer universe provides man with temptations to scatter his divine nature in vain attachment to variegated appearances, it is also the instrument of our ethical life for which it provides occasions of moral discrimination and choice.

Taking into consideration the part played by art in the development of civilization and in the enrichment of the lives of men, and the fact that from the days of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, the beautiful has been revered as one of the avenues leading the soul to God, this question of the moral and spiritual validity of Art is of the utmost importance.

We already know the attitude of St. Augustine, who interpreted the esthetic message of Plotinus for Christianity. Condemning the fanatical Christian iconoclasts, he said, "There is no health in those who find fault with any part of Thy creation." But many will wonder if views based on the naive realism of early Christianity are still valid in the light of modern epistemology and criticism.

Hinduism can be of very great assistance here, since its traditional tenets are perfectly compatible with the findings of modern research and thought. In this very important matter, as in many others, India has provided at the same time the problem and its solution. And the great thinker to whom this publication is dedicated, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, more than any other contemporary has rendered this aspect of Hinduism available to Westerners. Not only has his iconographic work provided a highly valuable introduction to Eastern aesthetics, and their bearing on the all-important problem of spiritual unfoldment, but his very career has been an illustration of the potent contribution of art and aesthetics to metaphysical understanding and spiritual liberation.

His study of the deeper meaning of art in the light of the *Sanātana Dharma*, the "Eternal Religion" of India, led him to point to the intimate relations between the work of the artist and the general operations of creation. It further brought him to elucidate the connection between artistic appreciation and contemplation with the

## FROM ART TO SPIRITUALITY

ensemble of operations through which man becomes aware of the processes at play, behind the veil of perceived appearances, in the noumenal universe which is intermediary between the world of phenomenon and the realm of unity.

From this survey of the processes connecting the work of art and the realm of ideal causes, Dr. Coomaraswamy went into the similar study of the passing of transcendent causal factors from their divine incipency to objective results in other fields of human activity. In a study of the traditional Indian theory of government he showed how the advice of divine perfection found its intermediary channel in the *Purohita* who focussed it on the *Kṣātrīa*, who in his turn provided the royal agent of the enactment of the divine inspiration in human society. Here again diversified objective appearances are seen to be resulting from the specifying and conditioning activities of intermediary agents relaying the creative force of the One Reality to the world of emerging objects.

In this view, every active human expression is an act of creation, "*vrata*," a sacrificial operation in which the actor "renders holy" his work in the measure in which he consciously identifies it with the Divine creative operations in deliberate self subjection. But in the same way that the reign of the Ruler can only attain any measure of perfection if inspired by the information of the *Purohita* transmitting the "informal" or unconditioned wisdom of Brahma taking form under the normative activity of Agni; the work of the artist is *Rasavat*, only if it results from a perfect *Yōga* of the artist with the divine idea causing the object to assume its actual form. Thus any particular object, natural or artificial, suggests not only its original archetype and the sacrificial act which brought its actual precipitation, but also, and above all, the immanent source of consciousness constituting the universal background.

This is the dominant message of India to mankind in its effort to apprehend life. The appearances of beings and objects as we know them are due to the sacrificial operations of intermediaries, relaying, conforming and conditioning the creative power of the One under the aspect of Brihaspati, the spiritual power functioning through the operations of *Vāc*, the Voice or Word. Both are associated, though distinct, aspects of the *Deus Absconditus*, the transcendent Brahma, whose essence is not only above time and space, but even above being and non-being.

And in a perfect dialectical spiral, Dr. Coomaraswamy crowned his career of meta-physical iconograph in sounding again the call of the old Rṣis to the beholding of the One Essential Being in and under all manifested forms including that which seems to us the most individualized, the human soul. In his masterful article. "On the One and Only Transmigrant," he brought his contribution to fundamental Advaitism, showing that if instead of looking at the cosmic process from below, as it were, from the point of view of the accidental occasions, it is considered "*sub specie aeternitatis*," as befits any attempt to get at essential truth, it is evident that the "Universal Artist" of Plato is also the Universal Actor. This does not deny the possibility of a prolonged duration of the individual human specificity under the aspect of time. But it calls attention to the fact that the Essential Reality while occasioning the emerging of apparent specifications in the cosmic process, yet remains One, intrinsically. Thus, he effectuated the reduction of diversity to unity, which is the ambition of every philosopher.

In a paradox frequently met with in the applications of spiritual standards to the problems of practical experience, this ubiquitous "intuition of the unity of all life," brings Indian aesthetics to differentiate two kinds of art and to oppose the servile copies of the appearances of objects, to the real works of art inspired by an immediate intuition

of the immaterial form which is the cause and "*raison d'être*" of the model. The so-called naturalistic art is not even worthy of its name since nature, in its essential reality, should be distinguished from the results of its operations. To the reproduction of objective appearances, resulting from the extroversion of consciousness which followed the Renaissance in Europe, India opposes works of art tending to suggest the ideal form inherent in the model of the Icon and constituting its fundamental reality.

A superficial and agnostic view of life, knowing nothing besides sensory appearances, causes some Western painters to become engrossed in the interrelations between these appearances and the "impressions" they make on the senses. The traditional approach to life is based upon the assumption that the cosmic reality is intrinsically spiritual. It holds particular sensible appearances to be due to the activity of factors differentiating the essential unity of reality in variegated emerging centres of individualized being. These factors differentiating the One into the many, constitute a veritable world of their own, intermediary between the realm of unity and the world of human experience where in every particular aspect of sensory perception beings are described both in terms of their contrasts with their surroundings and of their proportional opposition to their own contrary in any particular qualitative or quantitative aspect.

The clustering around the centres of emerging individual being of the sources of the different ways in which they affect the senses, is the origin of their characteristics. Thus, the appearances of an object result from chains of differentiating and projecting operations due to causes active in the intermediary world of *Bhuvās*. This is one degree nearer to reality than the world of sensory experience which is the world of shadows, of active *Maya*, of *Bhur*, the antipodes so to speak of the purely ideal and principal plane of *Svar*.

These three worlds, the Vedic, earth, air and sky with their three respective *Gandharvas*, *Agni* for the earth, *Vāyu* for the air and *Āditya* for the sky, form the three everlasting worlds of creation. From the discursive standpoint of human intelligence, subjected to the impositions of space-time consciousness, these three worlds seem arrayed in a progressive hierarchy, rising from the earth to the sky through the fleeting region of airy transmissions, mixings and blendings.

Yet, from a more metaphysical standpoint, which really means a metachromic one, since *Physis* happens for us in our inner duration, these three worlds are equally participating essentially in the divine presence of the One Cause, the Threefold Brahman of the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Āditya*, the three world-overlords, being only differentiated modes of *Prajāpati*.

Hence a double source of unity, or rather homogeneity, in all beings in the three worlds. There is an active, and one would be tempted to say, vertical correspondence between the beings of the Earth, their causal anteriority in the intermediary aerial world and the radiant spiritual spring of their being in the Sky; and there is a passive, universal cause of unity in the essential participation of the three principles of life on the three worlds in the unity of *Puruṣa*.

This is the reason of Eckhart's famous saying: "to whom God is dearer in one thing than in another, that man is a barbarian . . . a child." (419). Thus, even the spiritual animators of the three worlds, *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Āditya*, are only outer forms, limited and transitory of the uncorporeal unique Reality. This early Vedic monotheism, which anticipated Advaitism, was to find a solemn echo in the majestic *surat* of the Koran: "We created Heaven and Earth, and all that is in between . . . they are unreal."

Yet, to the facets of *Puruṣa* encased in men's hearts, the picture painted by the senses

## FROM ART TO SPIRITUALITY

on the canvas of the mind is the main, if not the exclusive stimulus of their awakening to an awareness of their spiritual identity.

Only a few souls are so equipped as to escape engrossment in the sensory appearances of objects and be able to see these from a scientific standpoint, as incidental aspects of the workings of the laws of nature. But, if scientific intuition is a rare gift, the faculty of aesthetic appreciation is widespread. In most men the perception of beauty is apt to lead to love, which is really a keen appreciation of the value of the achievements of the creative activity at work in the object.

The crux of the difference between the theory of "L'art pour l'art" and Hindu aesthetics lies in the fact that while many Western artists only try to represent the sensory perceptions emanating from the model, their Oriental confreres seek to underline the presence of the inner transcendent cause latent in it. An Oriental work of art is never an end in itself, always a means to an end which is the awakening in the spectator of the spiritual perceptions of the artist. This constitutes the spiritual value of art. Its specifically religious value results from its underlining of the theological concepts of which the icon is the symbol. It awakens in men the angelic or *Parokṣa* vision, which perceives the archtypes behind objects, while exclusively objective art deals only with the *Pratyakṣa* or purely human vision of things.

This deeply spiritual nature of the true art operation is underlined by the procedure followed by the artist. While the Westerner simply sits before his model and observes its outer details, the Hindu sinks in a deep meditation, seeking *Yōga* with the spiritual principle who originated the model. This is the most important moment of artistic creation, nearly the whole of it, the actual technical production being a mere sequence of the spiritual apprehension of the essential nature of the object.

This is why the defects in a work of art are imputed to be a deficiency in the *Yōga* of the artist. Not having reached a complete union with the ideal nature of his object, he fails to endow his work with the intelligible message of the *Parokṣa* vision and he can only render a sensible or "*Pratyakṣa*" account of the model.

The evocation of the transcendent harmonies at play in beings and testifying to their integration in the cosmic order, awakens in the spectator the flavour of beauty "*Rasa*," and raises the "*Rasika*," the beholder, to "*Samstava*," the awareness of his essential unity with the substance of the object of vision. This concord between the reality in the seer and that in the object seen takes place in the central core of being, in "The Lotus of the Heart." There-in lies the relation between all beings through their connection with their ubiquitous, simultaneous Essence, wherein resides consequently the possibility of omniscience "*in principio*."

Uplifted by his intuition of the intense perfection jacent in beings and underlined by the enlightened Yogi artist or artisan in true works of art, the *Rasika* really undergoes a new birth on the level of the identical oneness of the origin of all things. This is the perfection of the art process. Beginning by the perception by the artist of the essential idea or form embodied in the object, assuming objectivity through the technical processes of figuration, it reaches its culmination when the spectator's perception is so stimulated, so "inspired," by the expressed vision of the artist that he becomes aware not only of the ideal form of the object which endows it with *Sādrśya*, the harmony of perfect adaptation of parts to the organized whole, but is taken above this realm of formal beauty to the "Back of the Heaven" of the Rig Veda (I, 164, 10) where the metaphysical understanding, *Parokṣa Jñāna* is freed not only from the necessity of discursive analysis, but even



from that of intelligible discrimination. Thus it reaches the ineffable, immediate, centro-focussed awareness of deep sleep, *sushupti*.

In that highest form of incarnate consciousness, art leads its devotees to the threshold of the three higher forms of wisdom pertaining to the pure essence of the tri-unity ensoul-ing the three worlds of *Svar*, *Bhuvas* and *Bhur*, towering above the lower fourth degree of wisdom. This inferior one results from impacts from the world of sensory experience and pertains to what Saint Paul called the world of the Law, in opposition to the world of the Spirit.

While the world of the Law is subjected to the imperfections of succession and discontinuity, whose limitations engender ignorance of the One Infinite Reality, the three upper forms of wisdom are related to the essential unity of the threefold Brahman, above all restive differentiations.

That is the level where Angels need no modulated or articulate speech to commune and absorb the utterances of the ANGEL OF ANGELS in their centro-apical relation with Him. It is also the lower, or active form of *Nirvāna*, the awareness of unity in the transcendent knowledge of the sameness of all principles. (Saddharma Puṇḍarika: Kern's text, 133.)

Such is the apotheosis of Art. It achieves its spiritual mission when it leads its devotees to the level where the True, the Beautiful and the Good commingle and merge in their principle, the exalted Origin of Being, emerging from non-being.

In the perfection of its completed cycle, Art, beginning with the *Yoga* of the artist with the Divine Presence in an object, conducts the *Rasika* to absorption in the essence of the object in which he finds a reiteration of his own essence. This union is achieved in the exalted region where the noumenal world proceeds from the Immobile Motor of the Universe. This is the Sacred Heart, the eternal core of reality, ubiquitous in space, infinitely simultaneous in time, perfect in quality, Who was before the beginning of creation, or time, and shall be after their disappearance " . . . I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega* . . . " "The heart is the same as *Prajāpati*, it is Brahma, it is All." (Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad v. 3).

Thus Art in its assumption to the Supreme Reality, meets with the sublimated attainments of religion and science. "That," which conditions the possibility of *Rasa*, sentiment of beauty, is also the origin of the perception of Truth in the investigation of the laws governing the relations between beings and accounting for their modalities, which is the province of science. It is equally the principle of the warmth of Love, as well as its instigator initiating the responsive recognition of the Presence in beings. And in its contact with the True, which is the perfection of epistemology and with the Love or Goodness, which is the culmination of ethics, art does not entangle its devotees in the time-space conditioning and limiting factors issuing from the interplay of appearances on the levels where scientific theories or legalized morality are formulated.

The highest artistic contemplation is identical with the purest form of science where the truth of a concept culminates in the principal adequation of the seer with the process observed, above discursive affabulation, in pure scientific intuition. It also brings him to the purest form of religion where the love of God persists alone after the mental apparel of dogma has been transcended.

Thus in its apotheosis, Art merges with the culmination of science and religion in their common origin. In this, it assumes its full importance as one of the three pillars of the inner temple of consciousness whose edification seems to be the very goal of human life.

A CRAFT AS A FOUNTAIN OF GRACE AND  
A MEANS OF REALIZATION

BY ARISTIDE MESSINESI (GREECE)

*Gangā flows  
In bubbling foam  
And leaping spray.  
Behold  
The Shakti on Her way !*

*Gangā flows  
We ride Her waves  
And come to this :  
The Sea of Beauty,  
The Ocean of Her Bliss.*

IN re-expounding the Theory of Art with so much depth of understanding and such clarity of definition, Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy has rendered a greater service than any other contemporary writer to practising artists of every description. The testimony of one, therefore, who has himself benefited by that exposition will perhaps not come amiss in this collection and it will serve to show whether and to what extent an individual can make use of a manual trade as an effective means of Realization in this age of increasing disorder, when both the hands and the mind through which he would normally receive and transmit the Light appear to have become insensitive and unresponsive to every spiritual influence.

Let it be said from the outset that if the Light's reflection in the individual, that is to say his inward light, be brilliant enough it will shine through any curtain ; and likewise let it be said that there is nothing to prevent this from happening even to-day. Similarly, if the echo of Vocation, that is to say the inward voice, be sufficiently loud and insistent it will pierce through any wall. The inward Light and the inward voice represent the essential part of the individual demanding its rights. In a traditional<sup>1</sup> society it does not have to insist clamorously because a society of this kind is organized in such a way as to favour these rights. Modern society, however, being antitraditional, recognizes no such rights ; it has in fact tried, and by dint of trying, it has largely succeeded in squeezing the essence out of the individual and leaving a devitalized substance which it can mould as it pleases. Present leaders of society, those countless chemists, engineers, industrialists, publicists and psychologists are, no doubt, likewise listening to a voice of sorts, but of the exact nature of the call the less said the better.

<sup>1</sup> By a " Tradition " is meant not merely a historical continuity and still less a blind observance of customs bereft of their former meaning, but a transmission of principles of more-than-human origin, effectively applied in every field of thought and action.



The first decade of the XXth century was in many respects a critical one, for it immediately preceded the visible collapse of so much that had already been undermined during the Victorian era. The attitude of society towards artisanship had become one of indifference and contempt ; but so far it was not consciously hostile. Open warfare had not yet been declared against the manual trades and people were not being driven by such an inexorable pressure of circumstance into the mechanized industries. Compromises were still possible ; a training in handicrafts, though superficial and rudimentary, was still obtainable if one went out of one's way to search for it. An existence could just be eked out by work of the hands.

In England the influence of William Morris and his followers, which had never penetrated very deep, was by this time hardly to be reckoned with. In those sections of society which might be described as "cultured," and which incidentally were already predominantly urbanized in character, painting held the place of honour among the visual arts. It was an art which these people had made their own and which they were able to practise in a comparatively free manner. Handicrafts, on the other hand, which were less highly esteemed, became the appanage of servile craftsmen whose work could not be expected to escape the effects of the limited taste and viewpoint of the people from whom they, as craftsmen, received their commissions—though it must not be forgotten in this connection that the work of the rural artisan, wherever it still survived, had felt the baneful influence of the age far less than any of the "arts" of the more sophisticated sections of the community.

As has just been pointed out, a successful painter often held a position of considerable importance in "society," whereas a craftsman or an artisan was reckoned of no account ; is it surprising, therefore, that a young man, desirous of using his hands in a vocational way, should have thought almost invariably in terms of painting ? Neither were opportunities for training in that branch of art lacking : Art Schools abounded and many famous painters accepted pupils in their own studios. My own case did not differ in any way from that of other young men of my class aspiring to "Art" as a career : I chose to become a painter but, like many another, I was forced to go into business and train for "Art" in my spare time. The effects of the Art School were deadening. After a time I was no longer certain which I disliked more : the Venus of Milo or Miss X, the living model ; under my languishing pencil the Venus assumed a fleshy appearance, while poor Miss X might well have been made of wood or stone !

How thankful I am now for my love of plants and flowers, of arabesques and geometrical forms : this strong leaning towards formalized pattern saved me in the end. The first year after leaving business was spent in an orgy of untutored designing and in digesting the refusals and snubs of manufacturing firms to whom I offered my designs for sale. It dawned on me before long that I was wasting my time ; I and my designs cut straight across the interests of these industrialists ; we would only be like sand in the wheels of their machines, threatening to put everything out of gear. Industry gnashed her teeth or waved a tentacle engagingly, according to her mood—so I withdrew for fear of being torn to shreds or manœuvred into harmlessness.

My next move brought me into the world of "Arts and Crafts," as a devotee of the hand-loom. The "Arts and Crafts" movement was not in spirit a continuation of the William Morris movement, though it followed closely on its heels. William Morris and his colleagues worked inside the main body of society and their motto was good craftsmanship ; they were in the first place practical and business-like. The brotherhood

of "Arts and Crafts," on the other hand, retired from society; their motto was "Simplicity" and they called themselves "Idealists." These of course are generalizations; there were exceptions in both groups. Each contained something that was sound, but neither touched fundamental principles: society and the "human soul" represented, respectively, their deepest perceptions and their highest aspirations. In the 1930's revivalism in the "Arts" donned yet another garb: it returned to the towns in strength with "uplift" and "education" as its watchwords; it penetrated everywhere: into schools, institutions of all kinds and even into lunatic asylums! Present events have laid it prostrate; it may or may not lift its head again under some other form, but if it does so, its headquarters will doubtless be the "State Dispensary of Art and Culture."

But I must return to the early 1920's, the time of my accession to hand-weaving. At that period hand-weaving workshops or studios were nothing like as numerous as they became later. They were mostly situated in the country—often in remote parts—and they usually belonged to women of independent or partly independent means. The fabrics made in these establishments were of the simplest and roughest; they were not always devoid of charm of a certain kind, but they were often of a poor standard of workmanship and not sufficiently serviceable. As it happened, however, I was, at the time, unaware even of the existence of these workshops. It was in quite another way that I was introduced to hand-weaving and received my training. My teacher was a veteran of the William Morris period and I met him accidentally in a museum. He came from East London artisan stock and was employed for many years as designer in a Jacquard hand-loom industry. The Jacquard hand-loom was the precursor of the present power-loom. It was mechanized in spirit if not in fact for, though operated by hand and foot, it was so suitable for harnessing to "power" that its "conversion" proved child's play. It was soon turned into the power-loom of our day, or else was replaced by it—surviving, in England, only in one or two strongholds of the textile arts, such as Spitalfields.

When I met the man who was to teach me, he was working on the reconstruction of the "draw-loom," the loom which the Jacquard hand-loom supplanted at the beginning of the XIXth century. The draw-loom had been the traditional loom for fine patterned tissues in all countries throughout the ages, India not excepted. A great deal of my time was spent in following my teacher's experiments both in respect of the draw-loom and of other types of extinct or moribund looms. Possessing theoretical knowledge and inventive talent, he was successful in so far as function was concerned; but "texture," that very essence of tissue, proved too subtle and elusive; it eluded him, as it must elude every other weaver whenever there has been a complete break in the tradition, since texture is a *Shruti* element in weaving.

After four years with my teacher I founded my own workshop. Between then and now twenty years have passed. It has been a period fruitful in experience if in nothing else. Social and economic conditions in England made the employment of men an impossibility; the help of two girls was all that circumstances would permit, but in their veins flowed the blood of artisan and farmer forebears: they were true artists and became an integral part of my workshop; I could not have wished for better service.

My output was small, it barely covered costs and it had to be disposed of without delay; every scrap of material had to be utilized and there was never a running stock either of materials or of finished articles: needless to say such conditions are highly disadvantageous both to production and sales.

For sales, my workshop and others like it relied mainly on private or joint exhibitions organized by ourselves or by societies in some way connected with our work. These exhibitions were wasteful in time, in money and in energy; they disorganized our workshops for weeks before and after and, more often than not, to little purpose. Private clients were few and far between and had to be angled for and, when they came, they usually proved unprofitable customers either because of their total, though perhaps understandable, lack of familiarity with the articles they came to buy or else because they were people of small means for whom the prices worked out too high under the conditions then imposed on the producer. On the other hand, shops, architects and decorators were of even smaller value, either as ordinary clients or as patrons, so restricted and constrained were they by their businesses and their prejudices; and as for the Church—its patronage was conspicuous by its absence. All this goes to prove that when the traditional foundations of a society have been upset, activities which are quite normal in themselves are made to appear exceptional; they cease to have any intellectual or even rational meaning for the large majority of people and no longer answer to any of their needs, whether real or imaginary.

My work during these years brought me into contact with all the other hand-loom weavers and with many other of the crafts-people. Various loosely-knitted and often short-lived bodies, calling themselves indiscriminately guilds, leagues, societies, institutes and so forth existed for the promotion of our so-called interests. Some were local in their constitution and scope, others ranged further afield and included members from all over the British Isles and even from overseas; some related to a particular craft, others to a more or less comprehensive combination of crafts. Most of them had been founded originally by the craftsmen themselves but gradually came to accept an ever larger number of non-practising members. Their activities as a rule were confined to the organizing of exhibitions; some took the line of Education and organized schools, lectures and demonstrations; in one case a very useful quarterly journal was published, but in no instance, so far as I am aware, was the question of disposal of work given the consideration it deserved: to open a co-operative shop, for example, in the Capital or in an important market town would, so it was argued, be to reduce "Art" to the level of mere business. Yet, if they only knew it, it was they, arguing thus, who were the "materialists." Education, as it happened, was the safe line to take as well as the line of least resistance. You took in pupils, in the majority of cases candidates for posts in the teaching professions and the social services: they paid you good fees and did your donkey-work; in due course they would themselves become teachers and would teach others to teach—but to what end, may it be asked?

About ten years after the founding of my workshop, I visited India for the purpose of adding to my experience and to the scope of my work. The visit lasted a year, during which time I was enabled to produce a number of very fine carpets by making use of facilities offered to me for this purpose in several friendly establishments. Observations which I made while thus engaged led me to the conclusion that carpets manufactured according to the methods commonly in force in certain types of hand-made carpet factories both in India and other Oriental countries can be described as "hand-made" only in name: the epithet which fits them best is "man-power carpets." In spirit such work does not differ greatly from that of the machine.

When quantity is the means and gain the only end, the tying by hand of a bit of wool round a string contains no deeper meaning and will in the long run carry with it

the same effects as, let us say, the slipping of a nut on to a bolt: in both cases man is reduced to the level of a machine. When one considers the Indian workman who, in spite of all, has neither lost his skill nor the whole of his spirituality, this debasement is particularly tragic.

The fact that the artisan class in India has gone a long way on the road to extinction is much to be regretted, but no blame can be attached to these unfortunate people. In the majority of cases they clung to their crafts until they were starved out of existence or were reduced to the status of mere labourers. What, however, is *not* excusable is the apathy of the better-to-do classes, the potential patrons, who although aware of the state of affairs and while rendering lip-service to Indian culture and talking much about *Svadeshi* this and *Svadeshi* that, in practice do nothing that will in any way further the cause which they profess to have at heart. What is first of all wanted of the patron is that he should himself experience the need to furnish his home with objects that have been made in the traditional manner and feel uncomfortable when using anything different. To support the traditional craftsman, merely out of sentiment and apart from any compelling need felt by himself, will neither get the patron nor the Arts anywhere, because that kind of sentimental motive is both unstable and inadequate and misses the essential point. As soon as a patron realizes that the craftsman's interests *are also his own* then, year in year out, he will go to this source for his household requirements and the craftsman will automatically benefit by this intercourse. If, as is probable under present circumstances, a patron should find that there are certain things he cannot nowadays procure for himself from sources he is able to approve of, then he will hasten to take steps to remedy this want by a constructive and long-sighted use of his patronage. There is still much that can be saved of the Indian Village Arts and whoever contributes to that end will be helping to pass on a knowledge that is beyond valuation in purely economic terms. Organizing ability is not a prerogative of the West, neither is it a virtue sufficient unto itself: it is no more than the mechanism of an engine; if the motive power is misdirected, of what use are the wheels? How much grander, wiser and in a true sense more practical has been the organizing ability of the Orient, the rhythm of which fell in line with the Universal Rhythm and produced a Harmony hardly to be paralleled elsewhere. The "Village" has been a fundamental feature in Mahatma Gandhi's conception of the Indian social edifice for nearly 25 years and his efforts have not been entirely without results; only let it be more widely recognized that the question of the Village is not only a social one but in the deepest sense a spiritual one, and the results can be made still more far-reaching.

While in India I took the opportunity of visiting the Ashram at Wardha. I was drawn to *Ahimsa*; besides, to me, as a weaver, the message of *Khadi* was particularly eloquent and significant. Who indeed could wish for a more appropriate symbol of non-injuriousness? What use has he for violence who has coaxed and guided thousands of the finest threads, each of thousands of yards, through a series of operations requiring the utmost care, accuracy and delicacy of touch, in order that he may lay them finally, taut and parallel, between the rollers of his loom? A breath of ill-temper, a gesture of impatience and the work of weeks, even of months, might have to be begun all over again!

The connection with Wardha was kept up after my return to England by means of letters and through the reading of "Harijan." I made a special point of following questions relating to village industries in its columns and, on one occasion, I came across a

paragraph the gist of which was that, if the poorer people could not afford the latest chemical dyes with which to dye their home-spun yarns, they might, perhaps, "make do" with their local vegetable dyes—the implication being, of course, that the chemical dyes were unquestionably superior: yet, after all, it was the natural dyes which once supplied the colour to all fabrics, including those masterpieces of the textile Arts which are considered to-day so rare and precious that one is hardly allowed to touch them! The advice to the spinners of yarn to make the best of vegetable dyes in the absence of the chemical dyes is in reality a frank admission on the part of those who gave it that they are prepared to swallow the modern notion of "progress" with all its consequences. It is also an attitude which they cannot take up without falling into self-contradiction, for how can they stand for the revival of the traditional Village Arts while at the same time advocating the use of materials which are the very embodiment of modern profanity and how can they hope to convince others by arguments which they patently do not believe in themselves?

Having been duly prepared by the lesson of *Ahimsa*, I was now encouraged to read some books bearing on doctrinal and metaphysical questions. Among the works that could be cited as having been particularly helpful at the stage that had been reached were:—Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy's *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* and his *Hinduism and Buddhism*, also R. Guénon's *Crisis of the Modern World* and his *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*. It was now becoming more and more possible to relate what one was trying to do to the principles on which these acts depended and to be consciously guided by those principles. Although one's every act could not at once become a form of worship, as by rights it should be, at least in what one made one had begun to look for something more than what the unaided senses could provide; though the selfless goal might still have seemed a long way off, individual self-interest no longer dogged one's every step.

At this point a little technical and general information about looms and weaving might be of help to a reader uninstructed in such matters. It will also provide an illustration of the nature of the relationship that exists between universal principles and those governing the Arts, as well as giving some idea of the lessons that a practising craftsman will be able to draw from this relationship once he has become conscious of its existence.

First, when discussing the question of tools—the term being used here in its broadest sense—what is of primary importance is to remember that the hand, as the principal organ of action, is the master-tool, and that through the agency of the mind, which is at once an organ of action and of perception, it is linked to the Transcendant Intellect, hand and mind together, as it were, bridging the gap between the thing being made and the Intellect, without which nothing whatsoever can be made that contains the slightest spiritual meaning. This "bridge" must therefore be the first and last consideration of every artist when choosing his tools.

The simplest and most elementary type of loom consists, roughly, of four beams joined to form a rectangular frame while a fifth beam either slides in a groove up and down the vertical sides of the frame or else takes the form of a roller which revolves but is otherwise fixed. Across this frame threads (the warp) are stretched running in a direction parallel to the axis of the person standing before the frame; these threads are either taken over the sliding beam or else they are wound round the roller and can thus be tightened or slackened at will. It should be explained that the direction of the warp is

always looked upon as vertical in principle even when the frame slopes to the ground or lies parallel to it. At right angles to the warp another thread or series of threads (the weft) is inserted (interwoven) by picking up and missing alternate warp threads or else in some different order, according to a predetermined pattern.

There is nothing else absolutely indispensable to the loom itself except two rods threaded through the warp, the one picking up the odd threads and the other the even threads. The warp threads cross each other between the rods and cannot get out of order. This device is known as the "cross"; it is the Alpha and Omega of weaving and no loom can function without it, for, besides maintaining warp threads of any length spaced and parallel, it also provides the weaver with his only means for counting the warp threads singly and in serial order. The Weaver's Cross is in principle a "sequence" and, in the case of the more elaborate looms, it is the "parent" of a number of different but also highly important sequences operating in various parts of the loom. On the correct ordering of these sequences depends the proper action of the functioning parts of the loom and the production of a technically faultless material. One single warp thread wrongly placed in the cross is enough to upset not only the order of the cross itself but also that of one or more of the other sequences; if the mistake is not discovered and corrected at an early stage, the weaver is almost bound to find himself involved in a labour of many weeks of correcting, for the sum total of the units making up the sequences may run into a figure of tens of thousands of units, each of which will require separate handling. A weaver could not have the principles of Relativity and Interdependence illustrated for him in a more vivid manner than by these sequences which are of the very "bones" of his art.

The type of loom I have described a little further up is known as the "upright" loom as it usually stands upright or at a slight angle. Being the least complicated, it is also the least limiting and allows for the greatest freedom and intricacy of pattern without the degree of complexity in the pattern making any appreciable difference to speed in weaving; the speed that can be attained is, however, never great and the texture is normally thick and firm. This loom is also called the Tapestry or Carpet loom as it is on such a loom that these fabrics are woven as a rule; and incidentally they are fabrics especially suited to the needs of a pastoral or nomadic life. Such a loom can be improvised, if necessary; it is easily transported and the fabrics, which are made out of the wool of their flocks, supply all the tent and saddle furnishings of the herdsmen.

The other type of loom is known as the "horizontal" loom because, in this case, the warp always lies flat; this type contains many sub-divisions and must have developed out of the more primitive upright loom because of the need for greater speed in weaving the rich, fine fabrics of wool, silk, cotton and linen which the settled, agricultural peoples wanted for their clothes, their beds and for the reception rooms of their palaces. The brocades, damasks and cut-velvets of China, India, Persia, Turkey and Byzantium were made on looms such as these though, when stripped of their accessory devices for elaborating the pattern, these were the same looms which made the plainer materials. The degree of complexity which this loom reached in certain cases is almost inconceivable yet, so long as the Intellect continued to preside, the "bridge," already spoken of, was maintained intact even in the case of the most complicated loom. In proportion, however, as the Light of the Intellect became more and more veiled to man, so did the loom get more and more *out-of-hand*, which is the same as saying that the *Other Party*, having sized up the loom's possibilities, gradually took charge and handed it over to its own executives:



first Steam and then Electricity.<sup>2</sup> As for the upright loom, the austerity of its structure and the uncompromising nature of the technique this structure imposed did not allow of its being exploited by the powers of subversion, as happened in the case of the more luxurious and accommodating horizontal loom. The upright loom therefore fell into neglect, except in one case: that of the "pile" or "tufted" carpet, which the powers referred to contrived to exploit in the subtle way that led to the man-power carpet already described. But this is an exceptional case, only rendered possible by exceptional labour conditions prevailing in certain localities. The machine-made carpet is manufactured on a horizontal "power-loom" and has very little resemblance even to the "man-power" carpet and much less to the genuine article. In the case of Tapestry the machine has failed completely. Tapestry, representing as it does the principle of pattern-weaving, has remained inviolate and that is why every weaver should receive his first training in this form.

A description of the various types of horizontal looms, however much abridged, would still be too long for the available space and will have to be omitted; but we can, and must, give a few lines to the shuttle, that elegant and charming creature, which can hardly be called an implement, so nearly does it come to possessing a life of its own. Carrying the weft, it darts in and out of the warp threads like a streak of lightning or an arrow speeding to its mark; like a ship it plies from shore to shore, out and home again; like *Lakshmi* casting flowers into *Vishnu's* lap, it adorns and nourishes its Lord. To handle it is a delight and the "throw" is one of the most graceful movements which the human body can perform. No two weavers have the same throw of the shuttle or the same "beat" of the batten. (The batten swings from above or pivots from below and beats down each throw of weft on to its predecessor.) The weaver's "throw" and "beat" are as individual as the embroiderer's stitch and the touch of the hand can be detected in the material itself.

Neither can a short reference to the symbolical uses of the forms and figures of the

<sup>2</sup> While going to press a pamphlet has come into my hands, published by the organizers of an Industrial Exhibition recently held in Allahabad. It contains the following article which is worth re-printing word for word:—

#### HAND-LOOM SECTION GOVERNMENT CENTRAL WEAVING INSTITUTE, BENARES

"Government Central Weaving Institute, Benares, is the most important institution giving training in improved type of hand-loom weaving, conducting research and helping in the introduction of improved types of looms and other appliances for the hand-loom industry. This section forms an important part of the Textile Court. Besides this central institution there are six weaving schools and more than a dozen tuitional classes distributed in the whole Province for the development of the hand-loom industry.

In this court you will find different practical demonstration of latest improved appliances connected with hand-loom industry and the fabrics. You will see improved type of Benarsi fly-shuttle loom fitted up with double Jacquards—one being for the borders and the other for weaving cross-borders and figures or *bortas* in the ground of the *sari*. With this improved device a weaver can produce Benarsi *jala* work single-handed for which he requires two assistants when working on the ordinary loom. This device has not only saved considerable time and labour but has also eliminated a large number of technical difficulties of the weavers."

Benares is one of the few places in the world where the traditional draw-loom is still to be found, but one now sees that unless a reaction at once enlightened and determined takes place soon, the danger of its disappearing from here too, as well as from every corner of India where it may have survived, is very grave indeed, for the Jacquard machine has invariably proved to be the advance-guard of the fully-mechanized, electrically-driven power-loom. Is it too much to hope that members of Provincial Governments, such as those who appear to have had a hand in the organizing of this exhibition, will find it possible, as a result of the political changes now taking place, to alter their outlook on questions going deeper than politics and use their influence in future in discouraging activities arising out of the fallacy of "modern progress" instead of leading them their support?

## A CRAFT AS A FOUNTAIN OF GRACE

Art of Weaving be omitted ; the Sacred Books of all Traditions have drawn lavishly from this source when choosing their symbols, for it is an Art which is almost unrivalled in its possibilities in this respect. It should be noted that the Universal Principles of which the Cross is the recognized symbol can also be represented symbolically in the most perfect manner by terms borrowed from the Art of Weaving, for it is evident that a tissue is intrinsically nothing more nor less than a multitude of crosses, the warp threads forming the vertical arms and the weft the horizontal arms. I cannot dwell on this absorbing topic of the symbolism of weaving as long as I would like, but neither can I summarize it better than by quoting from the *Upanishads* in which the Supreme *Brahma* is frequently described as "That on which the Worlds are woven as warp and weft." Should anyone be desirous of acquainting himself with these symbolical forms and their manifold applications, I must recommend him to consult the traditional sources of reference as well as the enlightened interpretations of one or two contemporary writers, including René Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*, and numerous allusions throughout the writings of the recipient of the present tribute.

From the loom and what it makes, one is led on to the question of good workmanship. For a work to be well made, it must be "all that it should be and nothing else besides" ; it will then be uttering the Truth and—to quote a *Mahāyāna* formula—if Wisdom and Method have both gone into the making of it, it will achieve Unity, thus becoming a means of Grace. A work has to be conceived ; conception is revelation : the maker goes up to Heaven to find his model and Heaven likewise descends to reveal it. The maker may visit Heaven in his dreams, or he may be transported there by the Grace of his teacher, or while in contemplation of a work already revealed for the good of all those who are able to read its message. If a gift of skill has been traditionally accepted by the individual and not profanely appropriated ; if it is disinterestedly administered and not selfishly exploited, then the work will be faithfully executed and the material of which it is made will also necessarily be whole and sound. If it is of wool, then not only the fabric itself, but also the wool and the sheep, the pasture and the landowner must alike answer to the searching test of whether they are all that they should be and nothing else besides, for such is the interdependence of the essential constituents of any cycle that it cannot suffer interruption at any point and such is the oneness of Unity that it can consist of nothing but Unity.

The moment has now come to answer our opening question in a decisive manner, but before doing so, I will put the question again, this time using somewhat different words :—What possibilities are offered to a craftsman born into the Modern World, a world almost wholly profane in its outlook, for integrating his life through the practice of a craft ?

My enquiry has taken the form of a narrative in the unfolding of which many of the points implied in the initial question will be found to have been answered ; there still remains, however, the work of co-ordinating these dispersed and partial conclusions into the one which will constitute their epitome and synthesis.

The conclusion stands out bright as a beacon lighting up the Way ; unerring as the marksman's arrow, it indicates the Target :—A man's Art—be this a handicraft or some different work—if it is to serve him as a vocation in the fullest sense and not merely as a means of earning, if it is to fulfil spiritual aspirations instead of only satisfying aesthetic greed, must have its roots in a living Tradition. A man born *into* the Modern World is



not necessarily entirely of it, for he need not have been affected by it in every respect ; but, though not of it, neither can it be said of him as yet that he belongs to the Traditional World. His Art will be but a sickly plant growing out of an impoverished soil ; if he is not to let it wither before fruiting, he must find for it a soil which the Doctrine's Bounty has enriched. Where then should this cultivator of the Arts seek for the plot he requires ? Maybe in some oasis of Tradition situated within the ever-encroaching desert of secularism he will discover what, for him, is right ; or he may find himself drawn towards some more fortunate land which profanity's desiccating breath has hitherto left comparatively untouched. His quest is, in any case, likely to be an arduous one ; he will be guided to the correct choice by his own inherent tendencies ; but, though he must himself search, it is really the Tradition which will do the final choosing.

A man's task is described as his " calling " ; but does a man living in the Modern World always recognize the nature of the voice that calls him ? He is aware, of course, that he has got to live, but has he never listened to a call that comes from beyond the rational or sensual orders : the Voice of the Shepherd, for instance, inviting him into the Fold ? He may often have heard this voice, not knowing it for what it is. When he recognizes it, he will have " seen " but not till he has answered it, will he have " become." A great gulf separates the two ; how is it to be crossed ? None can tell, for it is always crossed in the Darkness of the Night.

*And so we see that every being  
Has first to be essentially itself,  
Before it can become all other things  
Within the cycle of its changing forms.  
Therefore the Mind, wherever it exists,  
Has a twofold function to fulfil :  
That of maker and destroyer.  
It must gather strength to spend it  
In a work of self-undoing.  
For, both as vehicle and obstacle,  
At once uniting and dividing,  
It lies athwart the road from self to Self.*

PLATE II

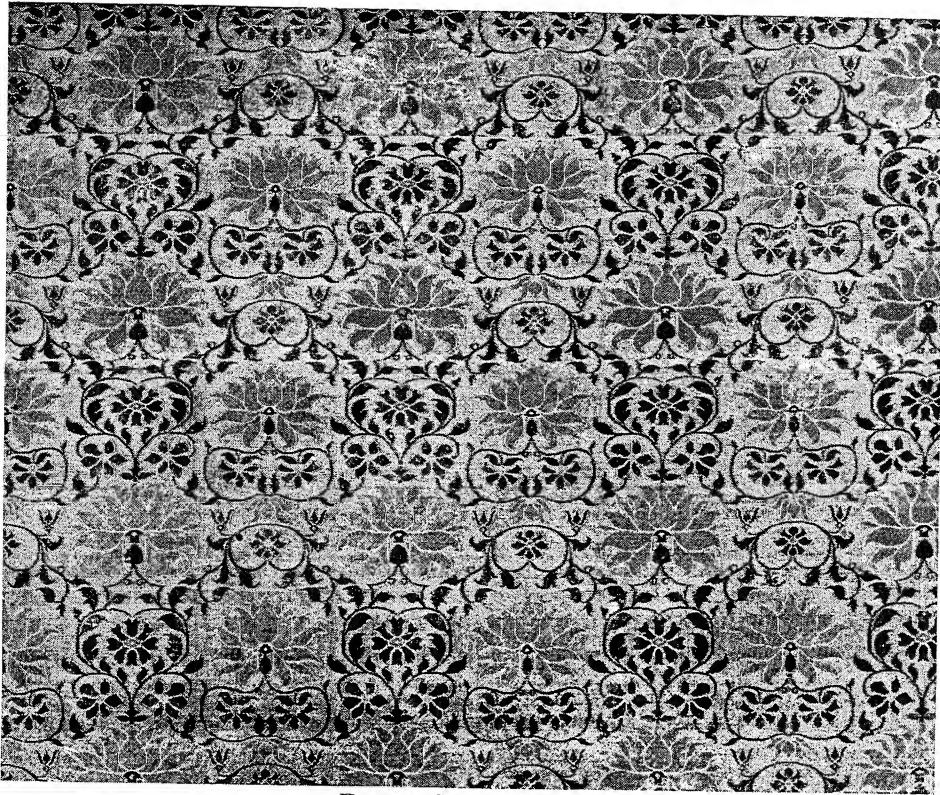


FIG. 1—Persian design.

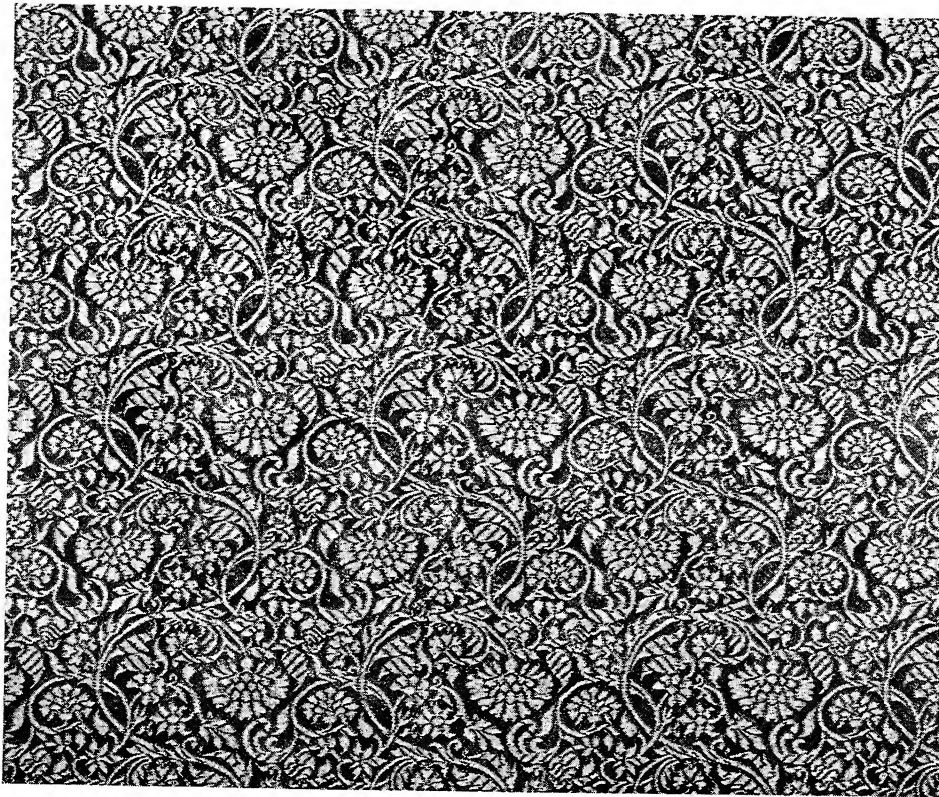


FIG. 2—Indian design

TWO EXAMPLES OF BROCADE WOVEN IN MY WORKSHOP IN 1940

Pages 40-41

PLATE III

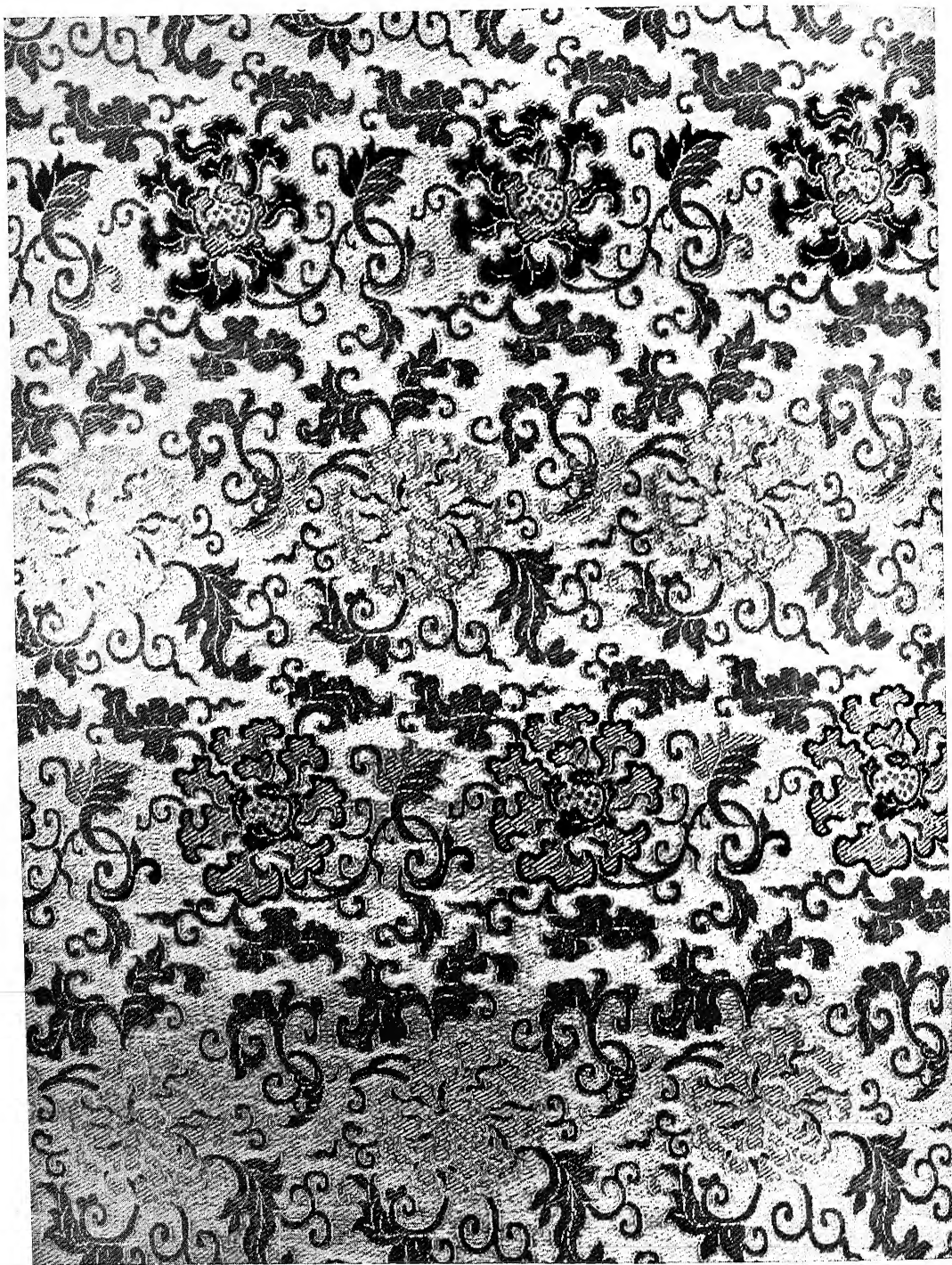


FIG. 3—BROCADE : WOVEN IN MY WORKSHOP IN 1941.

Chinese design



PLATE IV

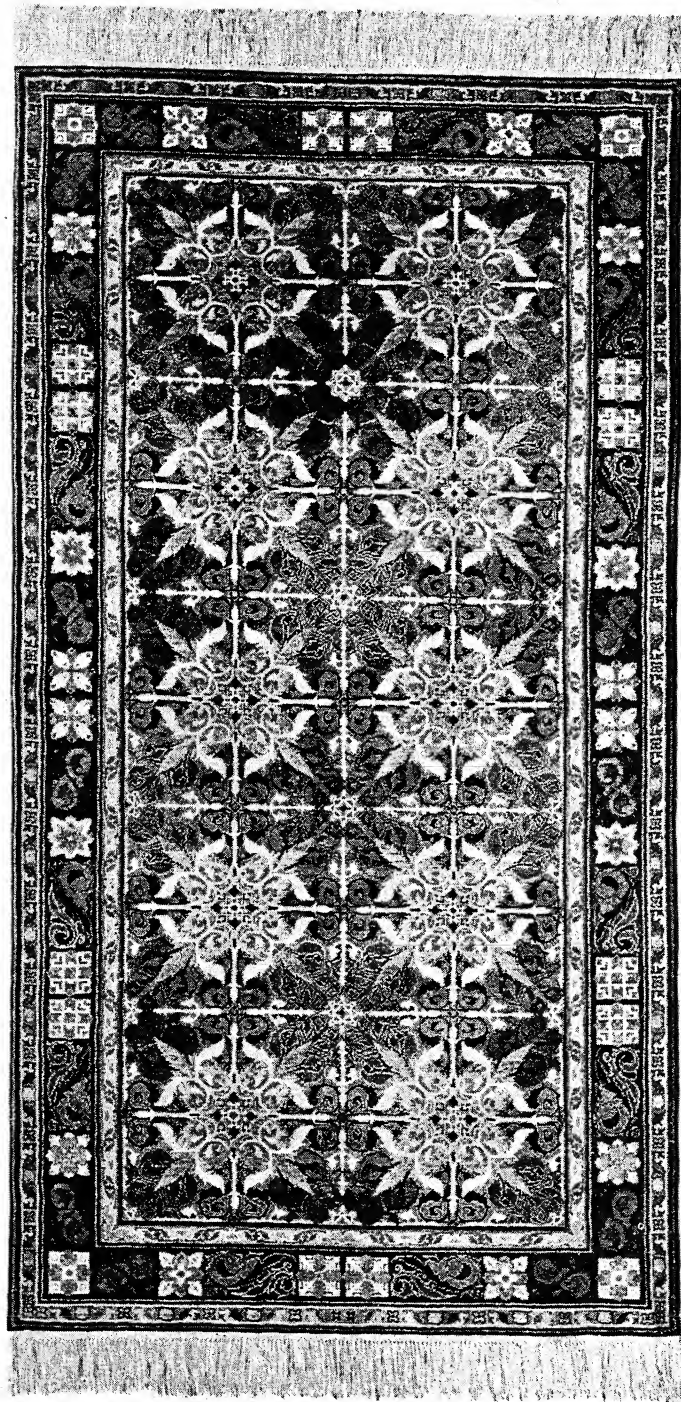


FIG. 4—CARPET: 11' 6"  $\times$  6', DESIGNED AND WOVEN IN MY OWN WORKSHOP IN 1928

PLATE V



FIG. 5—CARPET: 8' × 4' 6", MADE IN KASHMIR IN 1936.

Mughal design

## TWO MESOPOTAMIAN SEALS OF THE URUK PERIOD

By MISS ALICE GETTY (U.S.A.)

THE Iraq Museum possesses a cylinder seal of the Uruk period which, with another seal of the same epoch in the Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, in Berlin, is of intriguing interest. The fact that symbols, indicating the presence of deities, are to be found on both seals is not unusual, since, during the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods, the gods, as a rule, were not figured in person; but the arresting interest in these two seals seems to lie in the fact that unlike most of the cylinder seals of the IVth and early IIIrd millenniums, they obviously suggest either a mythical or legendary event. It would also seem that they both picture events in the same legend.

The Berlin seal (fig. 1) shows a boat scene. At the bow of the crescent-shaped bark stands a boatman holding a pole. Behind him, there is a reed construction, while in the centre of the boat stands a personage facing a bull. At the stern, crouches a boatman with a paddle. The interesting feature of this seal lies in the reed construction that is on the back of a bull, which is topped by two "gate-post" symbols. This symbol is one of the oldest if not the oldest south Mesopotamian symbol and is not found after the Jemdet Nasr period. It is considered to be a gate-post with streamers of the type that formed the entrance to the reed-constructed dwellings of the early inhabitants, and was undoubtedly adopted to symbolize the great Mother goddess Inanna, since "it was the prototype of the written name-sign of Inanna."<sup>1</sup>

Does this seal figure the "boat of heaven" of the goddess Inanna on its return voyage from Eridu, where dwelt the great water-god Enki (Ea)?

A very ancient Sumerian myth, immortalized by a poem inscribed on clay tablets found at Nippur, runs as follows:<sup>2</sup> Inanna was ambitious for the glory of Uruk (Erech) of which she was the tutelary goddess. To achieve this, it was indispensable that she should get possession of the hundred emblems of Divine Decrees of Government which were the "basis of the culture pattern of Sumerian civilization." Unfortunately, they were jealously guarded by the great god of Wisdom, Enki, in his watery abyss called the "Abzu" at Eridu. Relying on her great beauty and seductive charm, she decided to

<sup>1</sup> Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 64-68.

The premature death of Miss Alice Getty, which took place in June, 1946, is most unfortunate, and has thinned the ranks of Orientalists. *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* and *Ganesa* will remain monuments to her great talents and fine scholarship. Her contribution to this volume, the writing of which she undertook with evident pleasure and pride, marks her last literary attempt and was completed just a fortnight before her sudden death. The last four years of her life were devoted to a study of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. The article above is from this unfinished book.

Miss Getty was born in Michigan. She was an only child of her parents. After her mother's early death she travelled extensively with her father who was a collector of the art of the Far East, particularly that of India. The greater part of his collection is now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. The most important section is the complete group of the gods of the Hindu and Buddhist pantheon. Miss Getty wrote a catalogue of these deities for her father, the result being the *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*. In the early years of 1900 Miss Getty and her father settled down in Paris. During the first world war she did such admirable and extensive work in aid of the blind that she was subsequently decorated by the French Government. The last years of her life were spent in America, principally in New York city.

Even from her sick bed she took every precaution for the safe and timely arrival of this article. And we are deeply indebted to Miss Florence Waterbury for her kindness in speeding this to us as we are for the details of the biographical note above. (EDITOR.)

make Enki a visit and in some way get possession of the precious treasures. Accordingly, she summoned her faithful messenger, Ninshubar, and ordered the "boat of heaven" to be put in readiness for the journey. The goddess Inanna then "mounted" the crescent-shaped boat, accompanied by Ninshubar, and set sail for the ancient seat of Sumerian culture.

Enki, learning of her intended visit, summoned his two-faced messenger, Ismud, and ordered a great feast to be prepared in her honour, and wine followed. If we judge from the banquet scenes on such early Dynastic cylinder seals as those that were found in the grave of the queen Shubad of Ur,<sup>3</sup> we can imagine the two great Sumerian deities, Enki and Inanna, seated at the feast with a huge wine jar between them, sucking the date-wine through jewelled tubes. Quite as drunk with the great beauty of Inanna as with the flowing wine, Enki offered several emblems of the Divine Decrees spontaneously to the goddess and "the pure Inanna took them." As the great feast progressed, Enki, evermore under her charm, offered still other emblems until almost all had been given her and "the pure Inanna took them." At last, out of his mind in drunken folly, he presented her with all the insignia of godship: "the exalted crown," "the sceptre of power," "the garment of kingship," "the exalted shrine"; in fact, all the emblems of Divine Decrees that remained in the Abzu. The "pure Inanna" took them all and with the help of Ninshubar, they were deposited in the "boat of heaven," after which, the goddess quickly set sail for Uruk. When Enki learned of the sudden departure of the goddess and realized that she had carried away with her all his precious treasures, he summoned his messenger, Ismud, and ordered him, with the help of his sea-monsters, to intercept the "boat of heaven" and return with it to Eridu. Ninshubar, after an eventful voyage, however, was able to bring the boat safely to Uruk where the emblems of Divine Decrees of Government were unloaded "one at a time," amidst the rejoicing of the populace.

If it be accepted that the above Berlin cylinder seal possibly pictures the "boat of heaven" on its return voyage from Eridu with its precious cargo, it might be assumed that the personage standing in the centre of the boat is Ninshubar and that the reed construction behind him, houses the treasures of the god of Wisdom, Enki. The small reed construction that is topped by two "gate-post" symbols and supported by a bull, gives the impression of being a shrine. The primitive sanctuaries in south Mesopotamia were reed constructions. Gudea refers to a reed "dwelling" as having been placed by himself in the temple of Eninnu at Lagash.<sup>4</sup> Reference is also made to a reed sanctuary in the Gilgamesh Epic,<sup>5</sup> and among the Divine emblems of State that Enki, according to the ancient Sumerian poem, turned over to the goddess Inanna was the "exalted shrine" which was possibly a reed construction. May it be assumed that the reed construction at the stern of the bark is the "exalted shrine" under the special protection of Inanna?

Unlike the above Berlin seal, the cylinder seal in the Iraq museum (fig. 2) shows two events, that is, a main scene and, to the left, a secondary, separate scene by which it is, one might say, prefaced. It may be called "secondary" because it is much smaller, proportionally, in size than the main scene. This is not unusual in the later Mesopotamian seals where a deity or scene is sometimes introduced in an open space, small in size and seemingly having no immediate bearing on the main subject. In this case, the secondary

<sup>3</sup> Legrain, *The Boudoir of Queen Shubad*, Plate 1, A—C.

<sup>4</sup> Barton, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 191, statue D.

<sup>5</sup> Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 191, note 2.

scene is a crescent-shaped boat. If we compare it with that of the Berlin seal, we find that the boatmen holding poles at the prow are identical, as are also the two boatmen crouching at the stern, both of whose paddles have the same leaf-shaped ends where they touch the water. Evidently in the small space, the reed constructions must needs be omitted as well as the personage beside them. He is shown, however, above the boat and seems to be directing proceedings, possibly the unloading of the precious treasures.

The boat is headed toward a shrine that seems to be a reed construction and on either side of the entrance rises a rod topped by six rings. It is suggested that this symbol indicates the union<sup>6</sup> (the *ardhanārī*, as it were) of a god and goddess; or at least signifies the presence of the sanctuary of a male deity and his consort, and proof of this is seen in the fact that the shrine has two entrances.

As to the interpretation of the main scene pictured on this cylinder seal, that is, of the persons approaching the shrine with offerings, authorities differ. Andrae believes that the god and goddess dwell in the sanctuary and that gifts are being brought to them: "a girdle for the male deity and a necklace for his consort."<sup>7</sup> But in that case, the man who is believed to be carrying the girdle for the god should precede the one with the necklace for the goddess, since, according to the usual temple rituals for offerings, the male deity would be first approached with gifts and afterward, his consort, unless she is of higher rank in the pantheon.

Mrs. Van Buren<sup>8</sup> considers that the above two cylinder seals (to which she adds another of the same period which is in the Newell collection)<sup>9</sup> portray events in the ritual marriage ceremony. The boat (Berlin seal) is bringing the "divine consort" from his temple with gifts and offerings, to the shrine of the goddess. The second seal shows a temple toward which two men are advancing. One, who is obviously an attendant, carries a necklace. He follows a personage who is nude except for a transparent skirt and carries the carcass of an animal, difficult to determine. She believes him to be the "divine consort" arriving at the temple of the goddess for the ritual marriage ceremony. The third seal (Iraq seal) shows that offerings are being brought during the ritual marriage ceremony that is being enacted within the shrine.

There are several questions that one might bring up in regard to this theory. First: very few texts have as yet been found describing the ceremonies of the ritual marriage, but on none of those that are well-known is there question of the god leaving his temple for that of the goddess. One text which may describe a ritual marriage is an inscription on Gudea cylinder B V;<sup>10</sup> here both deities entered the new temple together, and apparently a ritual marriage was enacted. Second: if the Newell seal depicts the arrival of the "divine consort," would he, instead of his attendant, be carrying the carcass of an animal? Third: if, as she suggests, the temple is E-anna sacred to the Mother-earth goddess, could there be question of a ritual marriage since Inanna dwelt there "independent of all association with a male counterpart"?<sup>11</sup>

The scene may also be looked at from another angle even if laid at Uruk on the banks of the Euphrates and the temple accepted as E-anna. It has been suggested that the ringed rod that flanks the double entrance to the shrine on the seal in question was

<sup>6</sup> Andrae, *Jonische Saule*, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Andrae, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Van Buren, *Religious Rites*, Afo XIII, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> Von Der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell*, no. 669.

<sup>10</sup> Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>11</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XIV, 11th Ed., pp. 870-871—"Ishtar, by Morris Jastrow."



probably used, as was also the gate-post, to hem in a sacred enclosure.<sup>12</sup> On the Uruk and early Jemdet Nasr cylinder seals, both symbols are to be found rising, either the one or the other, from the byres of the sacred herd of the Mother goddess. A theory has been advanced,<sup>13</sup> that when the rod topped by rings rises above the pen, the temple animals are bulls (a male symbol), and that the presence of a male deity is thus indicated. If we compare, however, the cylinder seals of the IVth and IIIrd millenniums, showing the sacred herd either being fed or grouped around the byre, it is found that bulls may be present even when the "gate-post" symbol rises above the pen. This is clearly shown on an early Uruk seal picturing the feeding of the temple animals where the bulls are hemmed in by "gate-post" symbols.<sup>14</sup> According to Frankfort, "when the sacred herd is represented with its pen or byre, men are absent and the emblem of the goddess stands above the structure."<sup>15</sup> It would therefore seem that both symbols might indicate the presence of the goddess Inanna.

The author suggests that the symbol of the rod topped with rings may have a special association with the Mother goddess in her most ancient aspect of "goddess of Vegetative Life," that is, that it may possibly stand for a stylized plant or tree. The representations in person of the Mother-earth goddess in the glyptic art of the Akkad period show her with plants springing from her shoulders or held in her hand.<sup>16</sup> On another Akkad seal she grasps the stiff stem of a stylized plant having two leaves and three buds.<sup>17</sup> The seal-cutters of the early Dynastic period sometimes represented the endings of the branches of the trees by a stylized leaf, in form of a ring. In the Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, there is a cylinder seal where the terminal motif is a tree, the branches of which end in a ring or quasi ring-shaped leaf.<sup>18</sup> As late as the Akkad period, are found two examples of such a tree, of which one is in the British museum.<sup>19</sup> It shows a tree with ring-shaped leaves, beside the goddess. The other cylinder seal is in the Louvre.<sup>20</sup> It is the much-discussed seal of the "bent tree" under which a goddess is kneeling. Each twig of the tree ends in a ring-shaped leaf. Such being the case, might not the pointed rod symbol with rings super-posed on either side, stand for a stylized tree? Would it be stretching the point too far to suggest that it might be the earliest form of the "tree of fertility."

The two gift bearers figured approaching the shrine in the Iraq seal are nude which undoubtedly indicates that they are priests, if we judge from the early ritual cylinder seals before the Akkad period that show the priests unclothed when officiating, that is, when pouring libations or offering gifts to the gods. The object carried by the second priest is found again on the celebrated alabaster Warka vase in a frieze, where two "gate-post" symbols indicate the entrance to the temple of E-anna. Within the shrine is the goddess of Fertility receiving offerings, among which is an ornate band with cord and tassel. Since, according to Mrs. Van Buren, it was not the usual custom before the early Dynastic period for the women of southern Mesopotamia to wear the "girdle,"<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A. Eltz, "Nomadic Traditions in the Prehistoric Near East," *Bulletin of American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology*, Vol. V, no. 2, Dec., 1937, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> Van Buren, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, plate III, fig. A.

<sup>15</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, plate XX, fig. E.

<sup>17</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, plate XX, fig. H.

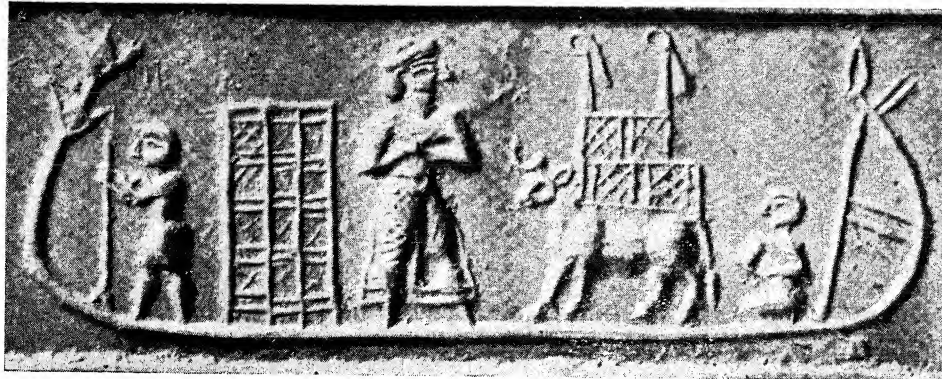
<sup>18</sup> Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, 163 (Ward 155).

<sup>19</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, plate XIX, fig. A.

<sup>20</sup> Frankfort, *op. cit.*, plate XXI, fig. A.

<sup>21</sup> Van Buren, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

PLATE VI



*Reproduced from Moortgat, No. 30*

FIG 1—STAATLICHEN MUSEUM, BERLIN  
V. A. 11040



*Reproduced from Andrae, Ionische Saule, Tafel, IV*

FIG. 2—IRAQ MUSEUM: 11953

## TWO MESOPOTAMIAN SEALS OF THE UROK PERIOD

might not this object be a jewelled neck-band, like those that were found in the grave of the queen Suhbad of Ur?<sup>22</sup> There seems to be reference to such a neck ornament in another ancient Sumerian myth inscribed in poetic form on clay tablets found at Nippur, called: "The Descent of Inanna into the Nether World."<sup>23</sup> The goddess prepares for her journey by choosing seven of the emblems of Divine Decrees with which to adorn herself. Among these were the "exalted crown" which she placed on her head and in her hand she grasped the "lapis lazuli sceptre of Power." The goddess then donned the "garment of Kingship," bedecked herself with a "necklace of sparkling stones" and "small lapis-lazuli beads she tied about her neck." The neck-bands or "chckers," found at Ur were of small gold, carnelian and lapis-lazuli beads, so strung together as to form a design and were probably tied about the neck by a cord ending in a bead or tassel.

If it is conceded that the Iraq seal shows the priests carrying emblems of the Divine Decrees of Government, may it not be assumed that the cylinder seal pictures the arrival of the "boat of heaven" at Uruk, the unloading of the precious treasures under the direction of Ninshubar, and their transference "one at a time" in solemn procession to the temple of E-anna?

As a comparative newcomer in the vast field of Mesopotamian iconography, the author leaves to those who have ploughed it deeply and for long years, to decide if, or no, these two intriguing cylinder seals picture the return journey of the "boat of heaven" with the precious cargo from Eridu and its transference to the shrine of the greater Mother goddess, Inanna.

<sup>22</sup> Legrain, *op. cit.*, plate III.

<sup>23</sup> Kramer, *op. cit.*, p. 188.



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# STUDIES IN THE BUDDHIST ART OF BĀMIYĀN: THE BODHISATTVA OF GROUP E

BY BENJAMIN ROWLAND, JR.

GROUP E is the designation given a small complex of caves about a hundred yards to the west of the smaller colossal Buddha at Bāmiyān (Afghanistan). The only surviving painted decoration in these caves is a Bodhisattva painted on the soffit of the niche that shelters the smallest statue of a seated Buddha at Bāmiyān (Fig. 1). The divinity is ensconced under a blunted pediment and wearing a costume that recalls the dress of the Gandhāra Bodhisattvas. The right hand is raised in *vitarka mudrā*. A necklace and heavy scarves are the only ornaments of the upper part of the body. In the headdress are fluttering ribbons conventionalized in the shape of French horns. The Bodhisattva is represented seated on a rainbow of seven colours that at the same time serves as the aureole of the sculptured figure below it. This conception is strangely suggestive of the vision of the Apocalyptic Christ seated on the rainbow above the firmament.<sup>1</sup> In Saint John's description, the rainbow is a familiar natural phenomenon employed in the mystic's vocabulary to suggest more tangibly the transcendent beauty of the Lord, and by its position spanning the heavens to vividly place the *Pantokrator* above the sky<sup>2</sup> beyond the World. Besides its appropriateness as a glory or throne, the rainbow is probably intended as a symbol of the Lord's mercy, an allusion to his compact of Genesis ix, 13-17.

In Buddhist iconography, the aureoles of rainbow hue are probably to be taken as standing for the magic rays of vari-coloured light of "precious substances" that the Buddhas emanate from their persons.<sup>3</sup> A suggestion of the possible symbolical signifi-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iv, 3: "And there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald." Cf. also the Vision of Ezekiel (Ez. i, 26): "And above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man above it . . . (28). As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about: this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."

A painting of the "Last Judgment" from the circle of Guido da Siena in the Church of the Misericordia at Grosseto (Van Marle, R., *The Italian Schools of Painting* I, p. 376, fig. 205) is illuminating with regard to the function of the rainbow in the iconography of the Revelation: the Pantokrator is seated on an arc of spectral colours that bisects his enframing mandorla; another smaller rainbow serves as a footstool, and below this is the Cross supported by angels, rising like the cosmic tree to the top of the sky,\* and suggestive of Christ's earthly body and sufferings as the Buddha in the niche may be the nirmāṇakāya of the vision above.

In other words, the rainbow is here an indication of a boundary between the World and Empyrean, a concept going back to the "Heaven Dam" of Babylonian mythology.

\* The Cross as a symbol of the cosmic axis as well as the cardinal points is an ancient one and has been treated *in extenso* by R. Guénon, *Le Symbolisme de la Croix*, Paris, 1931.

\* Math. v, 24: "Coelum thronus Dei est"; Isaia lxvi, 1: "Coelum sedes mea, terra autem scarbellum pedum meorum"; Psalm lxxxviii 30, 37: "Thronus eius sicut Dies Coeli; thronus eius sicut sol."

<sup>3</sup> Mus, P., Barabudur, Paris, 1935, p. 587. The idea of a rainbow nimbus is suggested in description of the final attainment of enlightenment in the *Nidānakathā*: in this text the Buddha is said to have emitted six rays from his person like "A blue cloud, the rock-rose, a white robe, a red garland, and a pillar of light." (Hardy, R. S., *Manual of Buddhism*, London, 1860, pp. 179-180). Bigandet (*The Life or Legend of Gautama, the Buddha of the Burmans*, Rangoon, 1866) speaks of these rays as brown, gold, purple, white, red, and crystal in colour. H. C. Warren (*Buddhism in Translation*, Cambridge, 1906, HOS, III, p. 92): "The Rays of six different colours which issued from his body race hither and thither over places and pagodas, and deck them, as it were, with the yellow sheen of gold, or with the colours of a painting." The multi-coloured nimbus is, of course, a translation of these rays into pictorial terms. See also Rhys-Davids, T. W., *Buddhist Birth Stories*, I, London, 1880, p. 125: "A halo resplendent with many colours, proceeding to a fathom's length all around his (The Buddha's) person."

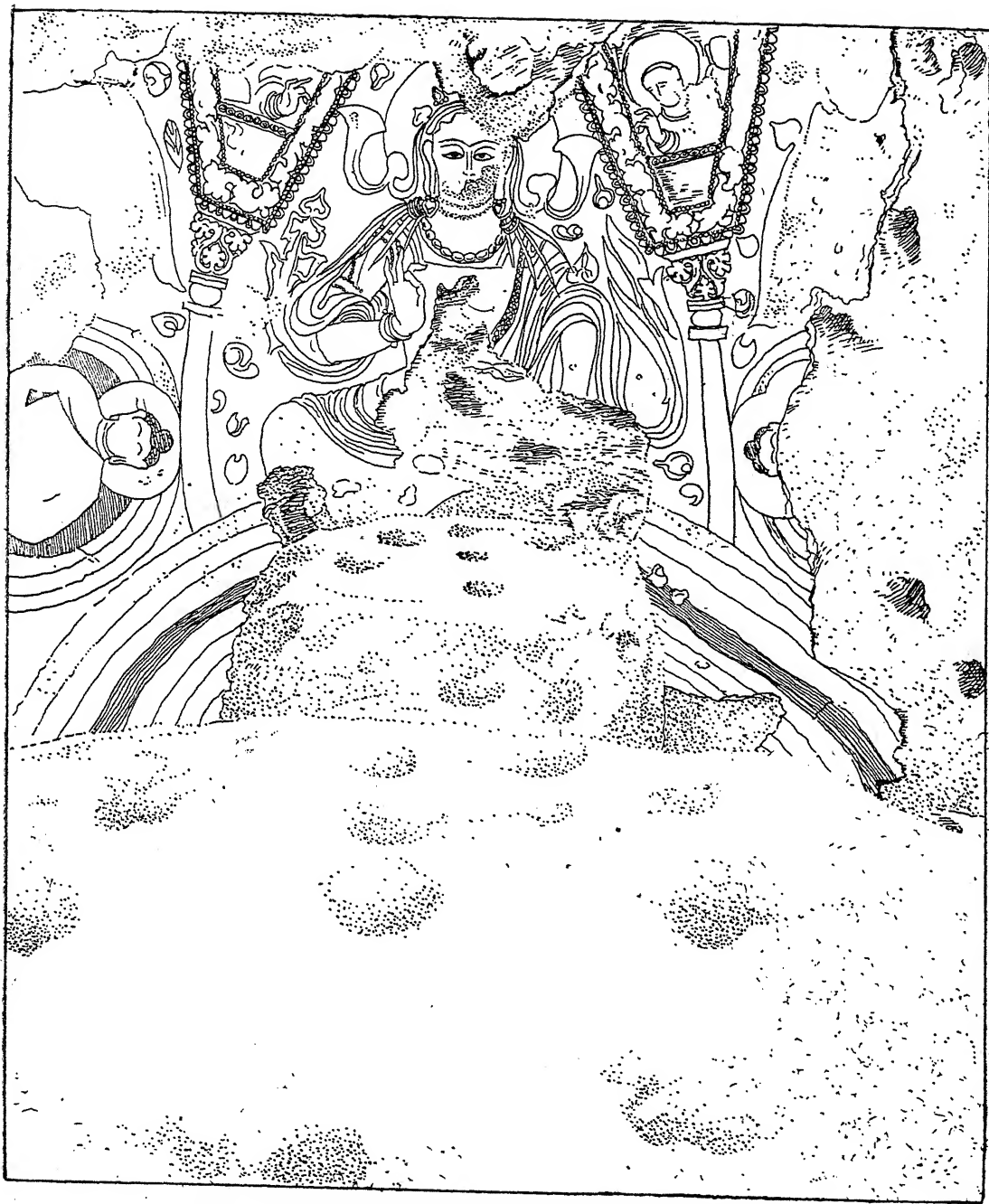


FIG. 1.—BODHISATTVA, GROUP E, BĀMIYĀN, AFGHANISTAN.

cance of the nimbus that forms the seat of our Bodhisattva is contained in the opening of the eleventh chapter of the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*: "then there arose a Stūpa, consisting of seven precious substances, from the place of the earth opposite the Lord, the assembly being in the middle, a Stūpa five hundred *yojanas* in height and proportionate in circumference."<sup>4</sup> Kern in his note explains this phenomenon as follows: "between the Lord and (the Sun) and the stūpa of seven *ratnas*, i.e. the rainbow of seven colours."<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say that there are in Indian ideology either five or seven colours (RV, *pañcaraśmi* and *saptaraśmi*) and that just as there exists a parallelism between the five colours and five planets,<sup>6</sup> there should be a like parallelism between the seven *ratnas*, seven colours and the seven *gyhas* or stellar mansions.<sup>7</sup> Kern apparently was not familiar with the ancient Sumero-Babylonian concept of such a "Tower," or, as it is called, "Heaven Dam," of successive celestial spheres that comprise both stars and colours. The ziggurat had seven stories of colours associated with the seven stars, and the whole furnished a cosmological diagram of the storeyed arrangement of the various orbits of the heavenly bodies.<sup>8</sup> An analogy to the rainbow is immediately apparent.<sup>9</sup> The colours were those of the rainbow which was regarded as an arc that disappeared below the horizon to make a complete circle, an arrangement that paralleled the courses of the stars.<sup>10</sup> It can easily be seen how this idea in Babylonian as in other primitive religions led to the conception of the rainbow as the "Path of the Gods" leading to Heaven.

What seems to be the final explanation of the rainbow as a heavenly throne is found in the use of these celestial arcs in Tibetan banners: in various *maṇḍalas* and representa-

<sup>4</sup> Kern, H., *The Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, SBE, XXI, p. 227. The body halo or aureole is not peculiar to Buddhism and Christianity but goes back to Mesopotamian prototypes. In the Pre-Buddhist period, there is, for example, the *Prabhāmaṇḍala* of Narayāna (Burnouf, E., *La Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, Paris, 1852, p. 559. Unlike the *uṣṇīṣa*, the halo is visible to mortals: it might from the frequency with which it is mentioned in the text be regarded as one of the *lakṣaṇas* of a great man. Sénart (*La Légende du Buddha*, Paris, 1875, p. 114) quotes the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 12304 xx ff.) in which the *Prabhāmaṇḍaladurādriśah* renders Puruṣa invisible to Ekata, Dvita, and Trita, who had come to Svetadīpa to see him.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227, n. 1. In connection with this sky-filling wonder—a sort of nimbus—I quote Dr. Coomaraswamy, "The word 'nimbus' cognated with 'nebula' is the etymological equivalent of Skr. *nabhas* (mist, cloud, sky) and Hittite *nebis* (sky)," Coomaraswamy, A. K., "Uṣṇīṣa and Chattra," *The Poona Orientalist*, III, 1, April, 1938, p. 6, n. 2). Putting it very briefly indeed, there appears to be a relation between this vision and the ancient Indian concept of the Sun (here the Buddha) supporting the sky. Tiered ziggurat, or magic stūpa are, of course, cognates and are to be thought of in relation to "axis" which either as a pole or cosmic man holds up the sky.

<sup>6</sup> This is, of course, a spatio-temporal concept including a colour, a jewel, and a planet for each of the five directions which, as M. Mus has so admirably demonstrated, is portrayed in the Sārnāth column and goes back to Mesopotamian antecedents. The Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas or the Five Jinas, each associated with one of the directions and the zenith, is directly evolved from this. In Japanese *maṇḍalas*, the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva (Jap., *Kongo-satta Bosatsu*), is sometimes given a nimbus of five colours to signify that this deity is a magic entity comprising the five elements, the five colours, as well as the five Dhyāni Buddhas. Cf. Getty, A., *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, London, 1928, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Kern, p. 227, n. 3. Cf. the Seven Lamps of the Apocalyptic vision and the Seven Altars of Mithraic legend which are both parallels of the seven planets (Saxl, F., *Mithras*, Berlin, 1931, p. 97). One might be justified in discerning a further parallel in these seven lamps which are the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Jewels.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremias, A., *Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, Berlin, 1927, p. 178. There was formerly at Bāzāklik a wash drawing of the cosmic scheme with a seven-banded arc above a pyramidal Mount Meru (Cf. Grünwedel, A., *Alt-Kutscha*, Berlin, 1920, Fig. 56). It must be remembered that at the top of both the ziggurat and Meru or axis was the "sun door" or entrance to the worlds of the gods. A very interesting mediaeval survival of the "Heaven-Dam-Rainbow" is seen in the *Buch der Natur* by Conrad von Megenberg (Augsburg, Johann Bömler, 1481 A.D.): in this book (p. 21), a "rainbow" of seven colours separates heaven and earth; in the various zones are the sun, moon, and stars. One may compare Dante's journey through the planets (Heavens) to the Empyrean (Paradiso, I-XXX).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140. An interesting survival of this idea is presented by Evans-Wentz in a photograph of the temple of Pemiondu Mon in Sikkim, which he describes as "rainbow and haloed shrine symbolical of the celestial hierarchies" (Evans-Wentz, W. Y., *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, London, 1935, p. xix).



tions of the Wheel of Life, the different worlds are demarcated from each other by cordons of rainbow hue that separate these various heavenly zones.<sup>11</sup> In the Bāmiyān fresco, it will be readily seen that the rainbow may be taken as the top of the firmament on which the Bodhisattva has made his heavenly throne. The banded arc of colours here is at the same time the boundary between the world and his paradise.<sup>12</sup> In this respect the rainbow has almost the precise significance of the Apocalyptic iconography.

Probably the parallels of jewels and colours in Indian religions has its origin in the *Cakravartin* myth and the Seven Jewels associated with the Universal Ruler; it is clear enough that, even in primitive Buddhism, the Buddha is identified with a *Cakravartin*, and thereby with his attributes.

Now, the proof that the rainbow halo is intended to portray a suprasensible state of power or heavenly glory is contained in the term of higher *yoga*, "Rainbow Body" or "Body of Glory": this is the highest body attainable by the *yogin* who is still in *samsāra*; such a *yogin* is able to exist for eons and is possessed of the magic power of appearing and disappearing at will in any one of the many mansions of existence throughout the universe.<sup>13</sup> The divine *Gurus* of Tibet are to be visualized "as being seated within the halo of a five hued rainbow."<sup>14</sup>

The Bodhisattva at Bāmiyān is dressed in the turban-crown and jewels of a Royal Buddha: the position of this deity seated on the rainbow suggests that he may be intended as the *Sambhogakāya* in the skies in relation to the earthly teacher, *Nirmāṇakāya* of Buddha, personified in the ruined statue below. Such an arrangement would be analogous to the Paradise pictures of Tun-huang in which Śākyamuni in the centre preaches of the Buddha Amitābha who appears as a tiny vision at the top of the sky:<sup>15</sup> it is Śākyamuni in his transcendental aspect who introduces mortals to the happy land in the West. This is the buddhist equivalent of the Christ of the Apocalyptic dictum, "*Nemo venit ad patrem nisi per me.*"

However, since the painted figure on the soffit of the niche is a Bodhisattva, another interpretation must be sought for its relation to the Buddha statue beneath. Something of the same arrangement may be discerned in certain Gandhāra reliefs in which the Buddha, seated in the midst of a great assembly of beings, preaches: above, in a tympanum, on his throne in the Tuṣita Heaven, the Bodhisattva is enthroned.<sup>16</sup> Now, in the Bāmiyān painting, the *vitarka mudrā* of the Bodhisattva immediately suggests an identification as Maitreya. Furthermore, the Arhats portrayed in the spandrels of the gable are symbolical of the guardianship which these beings hold over the law until Maitreya's coming, or perhaps they stand for the assembly of religious at Śākyamuni's

<sup>11</sup> Waddell, L. H., *The Buddhism of Tibet*, Cambridge, 1934, p. 103. The rainbow is regarded as separating sacred objects from the material world, and so bands of various colours are employed as borders for Lamaist paintings. The rainbow has sometimes been thought of, like the bridge Bifröst of Scandinavian mythology, as the path of the Gods (*Devayāna*) that leads to the *Brahmaloka* (Sénart, E., p. 217, n. 5).

<sup>12</sup> Thus the three staircases by which Buddha and the Devas descended from the Tuṣita Heaven, "appear to the onlookers like three rainbows" (Sénart, p. 225. Cf. Hardy, p. 301).

<sup>13</sup> Evans-Wentz, p. 318, n. 3. The "Rainbow Body" corresponds to the Glorified Body of Our Lord as in the Transfiguration or the Last Judgment. We are also reminded of the Buddha's *siddhi* of projecting rays from his body through the world and through all the worlds (Cf. Bigandet, p. 100-101; Cf. also Burlingame, E. W. *Buddhist Legends*, HOS, 30, Cambridge, 1931, p. 278 (Dhammapada 387, XXVI, 5), "The Buddhas shine both by night and by day, and shine with a five-fold brightness."

<sup>14</sup> Evans-Wentz, p. 276-7 and p. 262, "Directly over thy head, visualize thy Lords, the Gurus of the Line of the Profound Path of Consciousness Transference, sitting (in Buddha posture) one above the head of another."

<sup>15</sup> Mus, P., "Le Bouddha Paré," BEFEO, 1928, pp. 222-227, 245.

<sup>16</sup> Foucher, A., *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, London, 1920, pl. XXVII. Highly similar in pose and style and also identified as Maitreya is a seventh century Bodhisattva from Kyzil (von le Coq, A. *Buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien*, Vol. VI, Berlin, 1928, Taf. 17.



## ART AND THOUGHT

preaching.<sup>17</sup> The meaning of the composition here at Bāmiyān and of the Gandhāra reliefs mentioned above would then be Śākyamuni's preaching of Maitreya's Paradise, or possibly, since the composition in Group E is peopled with many other Buddhas, his announcement to the assembly on Mount Gr̥dhrakūṭa that, "He shall be the last to reach superior enlightenment and become a Lord known by the family name of Maitreya who shall educate thousands of *kotis* of preachers."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Note their presence on the Vulture Peak (Kern, pp. 134, etc.).

<sup>18</sup> Kern, p. 28. It will be remembered that Maitreya, wearing the royal diadem of Śākyamuni rules as a Buddha Cakravartin in the Tuṣita Heaven (Cf. Mus, pp. 226-268).

## THE GUPTA TEMPLE AT DEVAGARH

BY DR. VASUDEV S. AGRAWALA (NEW DELHI)

ON the banks of the river Vetravatī which is held specially sacred in Bundelkhand and beautifies many a landscape of that inviting region, there stands an immortal monument of Gupta Art, the Daśavatāra temple of Devagarh. It is like a perpetual tribute to the creative genius of Gupta sculptors who conceived nobly and with equal elegance gave plastic form to their ideas.

This temple is important in more ways than one. Architecturally it is a perfect example of a "house of god" as brought into existence by the religious needs of the Gupta people and combines many features worthy of attention. The style of its set up was copied from contemporary *stūpas* like which the temple stands on a sufficiently raised terrace, square in section and approached by four axial steps on the four sides. The face of this plinth was adorned by a large number of sculptural panels suitably framed by short pilasters so that the visitor while going round the temple on the ground floor could be made acquainted with a number of mythological scenes appertaining to the Hindu religion. It was like the Buddhist attempt to teach the Jātaka stories carved on their railing pillars.

On the plinth and in its centre was built the main shrine, a modest building with sanctum measuring 9' 9" square inside and the 4 walls 3' 7" thick. The roof is flat but supports at the top a towering *śikhara*. The flat roof is a well-known feature of Gupta architecture but the tower seems to indicate a somewhat later growth.

### DOORWAY

The best preserved portion of the temple and from the aesthetic point of view carrying the highest appeal is its doorway facing west (height 11' 2", breadth 10' 9"; the actual entrance measuring 6' 11" × 3' 4½"). The two door jambs and the upper lintel reveal several remarkable features. The jambs are adorned with beautiful standing figures of male and female attendants (*pratīhārī*). These figures with their gorgeous flowing hair and elegant drapery rank amongst some of the most exquisite creations of the Gupta workmen. The portions above the figures have beautiful bands of foliage pattern on artistically carved scroll work known as *patralatā* or *patrāvalī* in contemporaneous Sanskrit literature. Of the other features amorous couples (*dampatī*), dwarfish male figures (*pramathas*) and the Tree of Prosperity (*Śrī-Vriksha*) and bands of rosettes (*phullāvalī*) are typical of Gupta architecture. The upper lintel has two special features to show: (1) In its centre it has a projecting image (*lalāṭabimba*) which seen for the first time in Gupta temples became a regular feature later on and continues in houses and temples up to our own times, and (2) the two ends of the lintel are adorned with the images of the river goddesses, Gaṅgā and Yamunā standing on their respective vehicles, the alligator and the tortoise. This was a specially attractive feature which originated in the Gupta period and for many centuries afterwards was accepted as the best decorative and religious pattern of a temple doorway. It is most remarkable that Kālidāsa with his unusual

powers for observing contemporary art and life records the presence of the twin river-goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā as being in attendance upon the deity (*Kumārasambhava*, VII, 42). The literary description truly supports the architectural tradition.

## RATHIKĀ-BIMBA

The three other walls of the shrine are decorated exteriorly each with a big sculptured panel held up in position by a beautifully carved framework of posts, lintel and a sil. The choice of scenes on these panels is strikingly original showing—

(1) *Gajendra-moksha*, i.e., the god Viṣṇu redeeming the lord of elephants from the clutches of a monster-size Nāga ;

(2) *Nara-Nārāyaṇa-tapaścharyā*, performance of austerities by the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa in their Himalayan hermitage at Badarīnātha<sup>1</sup>;

(3) *Anataśāyī Viṣṇu*, i.e., Viṣṇu sleeping on the cosmic serpent Śeṣha.<sup>2</sup>

The panels are extremely well-done and are exquisite specimens of Gupta sculpture. "The drawing of the figures is generally spirited, and, in the case of the sleeping Viṣṇu, the attitude is not only easy, but graceful, and the expression dignified. . . . The excellence of these Deogarh sculptures has struck every one who has seen them, and in execution, I would infer the comparatively early date of the temple."<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that the clutching figure in the elephant scene is that of a colossal serpent and not of an alligator (*grāha*) as required by later tradition. The framed and sculptured panels bear the significant name of *Rathikā-bimba*.

## JAGATĪ-PĪTHA

The terraced basement, *Jagatīpīṭha*, as mentioned above, was adorned by a row of carved panels. Only a couple of them have survived *in situ*, the rest loosened from their position were buried in *debris* or scattered in the neighbouring jungle and the village. They have now been brought together under the roof of the local archaeological godown. These panels are veritable documents of Indian iconographic history. They were in two sizes ; the bigger ones measure about 2' 9" in height and about 1' 9" in breadth and supported a freezelike course of smaller panels about 12" high.

## RĀMA STORY

The following bigger panels relate to the Rāma legend—

(1) Visit of Rāma-Lakshmaṇa-Sīta to the hermitage of Sage Agastya who with his wife Lopāmudrā welcomes their honoured guests ;

(2) Lakshmaṇa mutilating Śūrpaṇakhā in the presence of his brother Rāma<sup>4</sup>;

(3) the resurrection of Ahalya by Rāma from her petrified condition. (Fig. 1.)

This clearly shows the presence of the Rāmāyaṇa story in the Deogarh temple. Besides the few identified ones there were others left unidentified. Amongst such may be included the following :—

(1) Rāma and Lakshmaṇa practising archery. Rāma draws the bow and tries to shoot at a target. Behind him is Lakshmaṇa stringing the bow.

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *History of Fine Art*, pl. XXXIV ; later identified correctly by Y. R. Gupte, *Annual Progress Report, Northern Circle, Hindu and Buddhist monuments*, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *ibid.*, pl. XXXV.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Report*, vol. X, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Report*, vol. X, p. 109.

## THE GUPTA TEMPLE AT DEVAGARH

(2) Rāma-Lakshmaṇa and Sītā on their way to the forest. (Fig. 2.)

(3) Rāvaṇa intimidating Sītā in the Aśoka garden.

Amongst the smaller panels are many miscellaneous scenes of secondary importance from the Rāmāyāṇa story, e.g.,

(1) Rāma and Lakshmaṇa garlanding Sugrīva. (Fig. 3(c).)

(2) Fight between Bālī and Sugrīva with Hanūmān as witness standing behind. (Fig. 3(b).)

(3) Sugrīva being persuaded by his wife and Aṅgada to welcome Lakshmaṇa. (Fig. 3(c).)

(4) Monkeys collecting stones for constructing the bridge across the ocean.

(5) Hanūmān carrying a mountain across the sky, most probably representing the scene of his bringing the Śaṁjīvnī herb from the Himalayas.

## KṚISHṆA SCENES

The definite connection of the Devagarh temple with the life story of Rāma is thus established beyond doubt. But what had never been suspected before is the association of this temple with the Kṛishṇa legend. For the first time it has now been revealed that the detailed cycle of Kṛishṇa's story was also depicted in the plinth of the Devagarh temple. The present image in the centre of the lintel in the doorway of the temple shows Viṣṇu seated on the coiled body of a serpent. It indicates that the temple was dedicated to the god Viṣṇu whose image must have been installed in the sanctum of the shrine. The presence of the Rāmāyāṇa panels confirms the Vaiṣṇava character of the temple. But the worship of Viṣṇu in the Gupta period was popular both in the form of Rāma and Kṛishṇa. Kālidāsa while treating of the Rāmāyāṇa story in his *Raghuvamśa* does not fail to make repeated allusions to the Kṛishṇa cycle. In the *Meghadūta* he refers to the cowherd Kṛishṇa bedecked with the feathers of a peacock shining like clustered jewels.<sup>5</sup> In the Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta we find a pointed reference to Kṛishṇa waiting upon his mother Devakī after he had made short work of his adversary Kamsa. It is now to be clearly understood on the basis of not only literary references but also of sculptures that the Kṛishṇa story had been perfected in very great detail in the early Gupta period (IVth-Vth century A.D.). From amongst the panels at Devagarh the following scenes relating to the cycle of Kṛishṇa legend can be identified :—

(1) *Birth of Kṛishṇa*. Here Vasudeva and his wife Devakī are represented and the latter is handing over the new-born babe to her husband to be carried away in concealment to his friend's house at Gokula.

(2) *Nanda-Yaśodā* in their domestic retreat fondling Kṛishṇa and Balarāma. Obviously Yaśodā is holding Kṛishṇa and Nanda has Balarāma in his arms. In the background are the cows standing as well as seated. (Fig. 4.)

A remarkable feature is the distinction made by the artist in the dress of Devakī and Yaśodā. In the first panel Devakī is dressed in a *sari* with an attractive coiffure of frizzled hair, whereas in the second panel Yaśodā is draped like a rustic woman wearing a head-cover (*oḍhanī*) and skirts (*laṅghā*).

(3) *Kṛishṇa kicking at the milk cart*. This is the unmistakable scene of Śakaṭa-līlā which in fact supplies a clue to the Kṛishṇa story carved at Devagarh. The child Kṛishṇa is lying on his back and is shown kicking at the cart with his left foot. The three

<sup>5</sup> *Barheṇeva sphurita-ruchinā gopa-veshasya Viṣṇoḥ*, *Meghadūta*, I. 15.

milk pitchers on it have toppled down. Yaśodā astonished at this childish feat stand by on the right.

(4) *Kṛishṇa and his friend Sudāmā*. Kṛishṇa in the centre is elegantly attired, wearing his hair in a gorgeous wig of flowing *alakāvalī*. On his left stands his Brahmin friend Sudāmā leaning on a crooked staff. On Kṛishṇa's right stands the lady Rukmiṇī expressing her discomfiture at the unbounden generosity of her husband.

These four panels almost complete in size portray four important scenes from the life of Kṛishṇa and offer welcome sculptural evidence indicating the extent of popularity of the Kṛishṇa story in the Gupta period. The panels are in the best style of Gupta art and may be assigned to the early Vth century A.D.

## INSCRIPTION

A short inscription in Gupta Brāhmī characters on a big square pillar noticed for the first time by R. B. Daya Ram Sahni<sup>6</sup> reads as follows :—

Line (1)—*Keśavapursvāmīpādāya Bhāgavata*

Line (2)—*Govindasya dānam*

"The gift of Bhāgavata Govinda at the holy feet of the Lord of Keśavapura."

Two interesting questions arise out of these, viz., the identity of Bhāgavata Govinda and the identification of Keśavapursvāmī. My suggestions in respect of these are as follows :—

Keśavapurasvāmī appears to be the name of that particular image which was installed at Mathura in the Brahmanical temple at the site of Katra Keshavadeva which is known even to-day as the Keshavapura *muḥallā* of Mathura city. From several architectural fragments and four-armed Viṣṇu images found at this site it is certain that a temple of Viṣṇu occupied this place in the Gupta period. Now, an inscription of Chandragupta II was found long ago by Cunningham from the site of Katra Keshavadeva. This inscription was intended to record, as inferred from the construction of the last broken sentence, some pious work done or some monument raised by Chandragupta.<sup>7</sup>

As the architectural and sculptural finds point out this monument at Mathura was a temple dedicated to Viṣṇu. It appears that the builder of the Viṣṇu temple at Devagarh derived his inspiration from the original Viṣṇu temple at Mathura and the presiding deity was given the same name as the deity at Mathura, viz., Keśavapurasvāmī.

As to the identity of Bhāgavata Govinda it may be suggested that he was a son of Chandragupta II and is the same as Bhāgavata Govinda of the Basarh Seal, and now of the newly discovered Gwalior inscription.<sup>8</sup> In all likelihood this Bhāgavata Govinda was the son of Chandragupta Vikramāditya from his wife Dhruvasvāminī and like his father he conceived the idea of building a Viṣṇu temple similar to the temple at Mathura during the period of his rulership in Mālavā.

<sup>6</sup> *Annual Progress Report, Northern Circle, 1918, p. 12.*

<sup>7</sup> Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions* No. 4, p. 25, *Mahārājādhirāja sri Samudraguptasya putrēna tatparigrahi-tena mahādevyam ātāt devyānubhānena paramabhāgavateṇa maharajadhi raja sri (chandraguptena).*

<sup>8</sup> Being edited by Mr. M. B. Garde, Director of Archaeology, Gwalior State, in the *Epigraphia Indica*.

PLATE VII



FIG. 1—RAMA REVIVIFYING AHALYA  
From Devagarh, Supta Temple



FIG. 2—RAMA, LAKSHMANA AND SITA GOING TO THE FOREST  
Devagarh Supta Temple



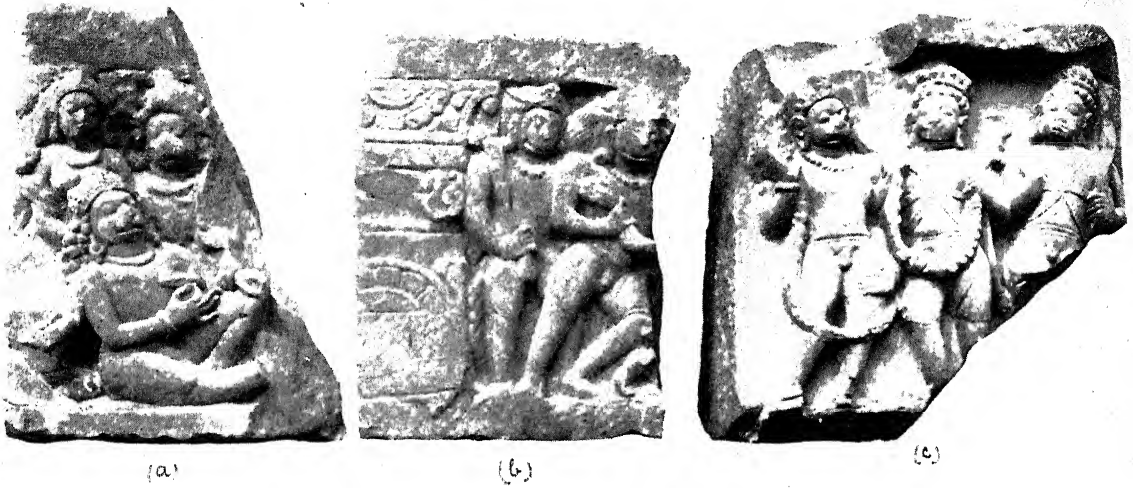


FIG. 3—(a) SUGRIVA WITH HIS WIFE AND ANGADA WELCOMING LAKSHMANA  
 (b) FIGHT BETWEEN BALI AND SUGRIVA  
 (c) RAMA GARLANDING SUGRIVA

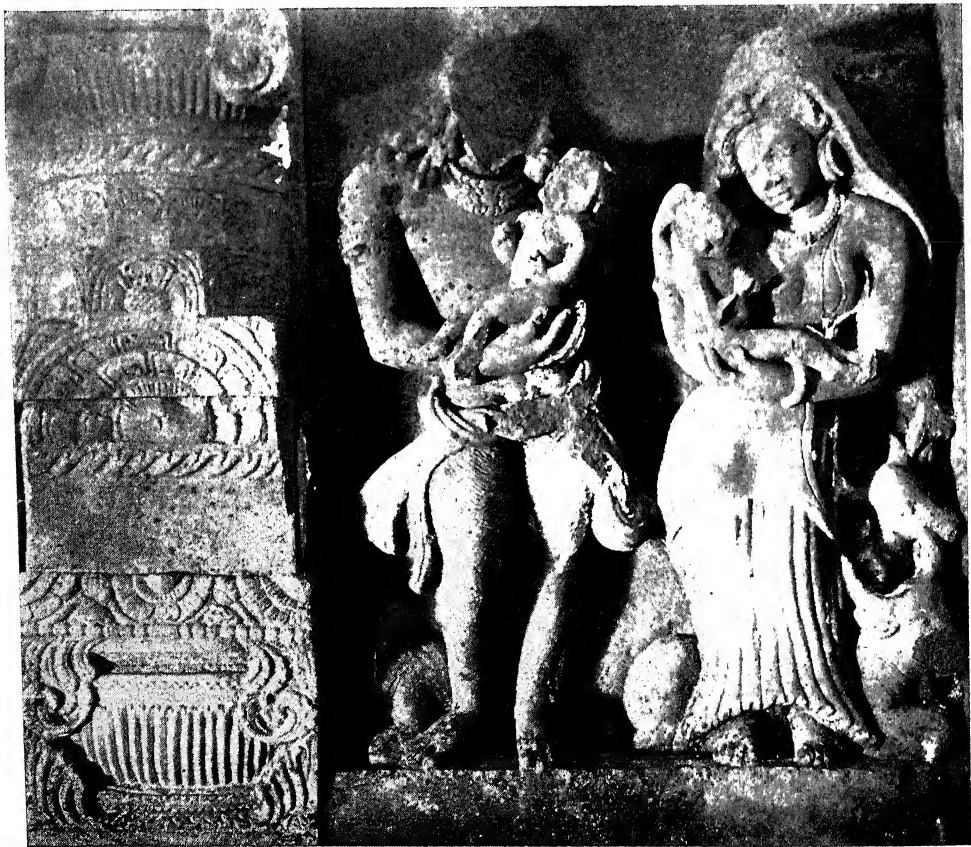


FIG 4—NANDA AND YASODA WITH BALARAMA AND KRISHNA  
 Devagarh, 5th century A.D.



PLATE IX



FIG. 5—DOORWAY OF THE DEVAGARH TEMPLE SUPTA PERIOD.

## SIDDHA

### SANSKRIT LETTERS AS MYSTICAL SYMBOLS IN LATER BUDDHISM OUTSIDE INDIA\*

By DR. LUCIAN SCHERMAN (U.S.A.)

THE script with which I have to deal bears the distinctive name *Siddha*. It is difficult to find a one-word translation of this term. "Fortunate issue" may be fairly adequate. Let us recall Buddha's famous name Siddhārtha, the personal meaning of which is similar to that of Tathāgata. Speaking of "fortune" we have a flavour of something incalculable or even magic; the latin proverb "Fortes fortuna adjuvat" implies human energy with a connotation of superhuman, i.e. divine power.

For the following discussion the mystic sense of the word *Siddha* is decisive. But I cannot pass over in silence that it serves also as a name of any Indo-Aryan alphabet<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, it is used for starting a literary production with a good omen—such as *hail*, originally an old Norwegian salutation.

Amongst the Japanese objects in leading ethnographical museums there occur sometimes accessories to armour and weapons inscribed with letters of foreign style. An experienced eye will soon recognise their Indian type; but we cannot help wondering: what is the reason for this deviation from the country's customary practice? And since Indian letters are favoured, why are such unusual characters employed as are never met with in standard works?

To answer these questions I must call special attention to an instructive compendium unique in its kind, the Japanese *Butsu zō zui* (List of Buddhist images). A re-arrangement with a German translation is hidden in *Nippon*, a monumental work of five folio

Our distinguished contributor, Dr. Lucian Scherman, was suddenly taken ill and passed away on the 29th May, 1946, at the age of 81 years. The loss to the world of scholarship is irreparable. He was one of the most distinguished Orientalists of our time and was an acknowledged authority on ethnography, philology and civilization of India. Finding no peace and safety in Nazi-ridden Europe he left Munich in 1939 and settled down in U.S.A., where he continued his work with great devotion at the Fogg Art Museum. His study on "Siddha" written for this volume "hews to the line" of scholarship on a high level and will be widely welcomed as an outstanding contribution to a subject of which little is known at present. Deep and poignant interest attaches to this study. He was working on it almost till his last days; he took ill only after it was mailed. This is his last scientific and literary effort and was undertaken with great pleasure and enthusiasm. Parts of it were written, as the author himself wrote in one of his charming letters, in Dr. Coomaraswamy's office at the Boston Museum and he made no secret of the fact that he felt deeply honoured at being invited to join in this Festschrift designed to honour one whom he held in high respect and admiration. (EDITOR.)

\* My sincere thanks are due to Misses Blanche Magurn and Elizabeth Strassmann (Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge) for valuable technical help.

<sup>1</sup> In regard to this point and several other subjects which will be discussed on the following pages, see E. Pagel, *Der Ursprung der japanischen Katakana und der Fünfzig-Laute-Tafel*, ZDMG 91 (1937), pp. 735-50. The influence of Indian linguists and especially Shittan scholars on the Katakana writing introduced in the VIIIth century A.D. is evident; cf. S. Kanazawa, *Über den Einfluss des Sanskrits auf das japan. und korean. Schriftsystem* (1907).

The first European Sanskrit grammar was printed in Rome, 1790; the author, Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, entitled it *Sidharubam seu Grammatica Samscritamica*.

volumes, published by Philipp Franz von Siebold<sup>2</sup> between 1832 and 1852. It was inconvenient to handle these awkward volumes, the more so as several parts were kept unbound in the libraries, because they were unfinished and without index. In 1930-31 the "Japan-institut" in Berlin, therefore, printed a new (4 vols.) edition without any alterations; a separate volume by F. M. Trautz contains the Addenda and a full index of 240 pages.

The German translation of the *Butsu zō zui* was entrusted to von Siebold, the collaborator of Dr. J. Hoffmann. The Japanese edition used by them had been issued in 1690 and the images are numbered from 1 to 631; and 244 of them (in later editions 366) have in the upper right corner a Siddha syllable. Both Siebold and Hoffmann were conscious of the connection of certain syllables with certain deities, but this fact was brought up rarely and an explanation was given only in a very few instances. In one place, New Ed., p. 463, Siebold promised later to come back to the striking use of an Indian script in a Japanese work and to draw up a whole alphabet. Unfortunately he did not, and in the extremely condensed edition of 1897 this remark was eliminated—a proof that there were no further notes on that subject among the papers he had left.

The *Butsu zō zui* did not receive the attention it deserves, considering its qualities. But Max Muller, his outstanding pupil Bunyiu Nanjiō, and George Bühler,<sup>3</sup> in disclosing the prototype of the alphabet, contributed much to the solution of the problem. They supplied the proof that the Siddha writing goes back directly to the Indian alphabet of the first quarter of the VIth century. China obtained knowledge of it by 520, and Japan's horizon was widened in the same way in 609 A.D. by the transfer of two palm-leaf manuscripts to the most sacred Hōryūji temple near Nara.<sup>4</sup> On these leaves are written a Mahāyāna (Northern Buddhist) text, a mystic formula (so-called Dhāraṇī) and a synopsis of the Siddha alphabet of 51 letters used in these texts. It is the oldest extant set of an Indian alphabet and shows the very same characters called Shittan, which are still alive to a certain degree in Japan.<sup>5</sup>

Yet there remain some difficulties for a fluent and incontestable reading. Continuous sets of words cause less trouble since the ordinary Sanskrit helps to overcome confusion of letters shaped nearly alike, typographical faults, incorrect or dialectically tainted spelling, vernacularisms, etc.<sup>6</sup> For isolated syllables, however, guessing and comparing are frequently necessary aids with regard to the well-known, often complicated ligatures of Indian letters.

The chief points now to be cleared up may be indicated by the following questions: What motives decided the selection of this or that syllable? Can any outer or inner relation, symbolic or otherwise, be established between image and letter, or, finally, is there a secret power inherent in the Siddha letters *per se*?

I confine myself to the quintessence: we become witnesses of an act of demonic

<sup>2</sup> Born 1796 in Würzburg, died 1866 in Munich; in Japan 1823-30 and 1859-61, several years private physician to the Mikado. He is one of the originators of methodical ethnography. See S. Kure, *Ph. Fr. v. Siebold und sein Einfluss auf die japanische Zivilization der neueren Zeit, Feestbundel Batav. Genootschap v. Kunsten en Wetenschappen* I (1929), pp. 410-29.—Vol. II, part 5: *Pantheon von Nippon* (1852). 186 p p. 45 ff: *Das Buddha-Pantheon v. Nippon: Butsu zō dsui* (Fu siang t'ü wei) aus. d. jap. Originale übs. u. mit erläuternden Anmerkungen versehen von Dr. J. Hoffmann.

<sup>3</sup> *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Aryan Series, vol. I, part 3 (1884); S. Bühler, *Indian Studies*, III, 2 (1898), pp. 24 ff; cf. E. Windisch, *Gesch. d. Sanskrit-Philol.* 2 (1920) pp. 299 f.

<sup>4</sup> Albrecht Weber's objections (*Ind. Studien*, 18 (1898) pp. 468-71) do not suffice to shake this date.

<sup>5</sup> There are quite a few Japanese primers for learning Shittan, e.g. *Bonji shittanshō*, *Dai shittan shō hon matsū*, 1734: Boston Museum 36626/7. The most instructive source is the Japanese work mentioned in my note 2, pp. 1940-46.

<sup>6</sup> Analogous remarks referring to Bagchi's dictionaries (see note 21) are found in S. K. Chatterji, *New Indian Antiquary*, 2 (1940), p. 741

conjunction, or as others<sup>7</sup> might interpret it, of an act of producing magic effects by natural means. Those letters are named *bīja*, that is the Sanskrit word for the male seed pertaining to any being, plants included. The magic syllable is the seed, the germ of the god, its sound invokes him with the purpose of achieving ecstatic contemplation, an entire oneness of the appealing person and the involved superhuman being. To quote A. Foucher (*Etude sur l'iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, II (1905), p. 10): "Quelle que soit la monstruosité de la figure surnaturelle, en dépit même de la différence des sexes, elle devient lui, il devient elle." Joined together in a triad are seed, spell (or incantation), and image, Skr. *bīja*, *mantra*, *pratimā*; thereby, at the same time, Buddha's mind, speech and body are symbolized. *Bīja* and *mantra* correspond in an ideal sense with the physical attitude of the hands, the *mudrās*, which sometimes also designate positions of the body.<sup>8</sup>

Whoever is informed about the intricate variants and the subtle distinctions of the *mudrās* will not feel inclined to concede arbitrariness with respect to the *bījas*. It was bewildering to me that the learned D. T. Suzuki put his opinion concerning the different formulas devoted to the Japanese-Buddhist God Fudo (Skr. *Acala*=immovable) into the verdict "they have no special meaning."<sup>9</sup> A still severer sentence was passed by Max Muller l.c., p. 314 on the "miserable dhāraṇīs . . ." By and by a few scholars pleaded as sober judges for the mystic texts.<sup>10</sup> From the Sādhana manuscripts of the XIIth to the XIXth century—sādhana means like Siddha "achievement"—Foucher cleverly deduced the following rule (II, p. 33): Generally, to each deity a syllable from its name with affixed nasal consonant is assigned as *bīja*; however, in a considerable proportion not the spelling of the name is decisive but its meaning as expressed by synonyms or otherwise. The Dutch scholar M. W. de Visser<sup>11</sup> takes the first or the last syllable of the prayers into consideration for explaining the *bījas*. Full of reliable material is Raghu Vira and Shodo Taki (the co-operation of a Hindu and a Japanese philologist is very desirable), Dakshināmūrti's *Uddhāra-Kōśa: A dictionary of the secret Tantric syllabic code*, Lahore, 1938. Here one reads (p. 5): "The monosyllables are no longer a gibberish. They have a meaning. Their combinations as *mantras* are not merely a string of isolated items, but they form an organic whole. The age of mechanical juxtaposition of syllables is the sign of degeneration."

This conception threw new light upon our Japanese Buddhist pantheon. Various

<sup>7</sup> E. W. Hopkins: "Buddhistic Mysticism" (*Indian Studies . . . Lanman* (1929), pp. 113-34) does not directly touch our theme. It seems to me that he goes too far concerning rationalistic limitation of mysticism (pp. 113, 116 ff.) and that he likewise undervalues the positive substratum of Nirvāṇa. Nevertheless H's study is clearer and wiser than most of its kind. As to ancient Brahmanism I recall J. W. Hauer's interpretation of ecstasy in "Rigveda and Atharvaveda" (*Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis* (1922), esp. pp. 3 ff., 169 ff., 199; cf. M. Winternitz, *Z.F. Buddhismus*, 6 (1924), pp. 48-60; Hauer, *Vrātya* (1927)). Cf. also Hauer, *Yoga* (1932), pp. 6 f., 144 (his statement "Der Yoga eine grosse Bewegung urinogermanischen Geistes" is scarcely acceptable).

<sup>8</sup> L. Finot, *Mss. skr. de Sādhana's retrouvés en Chine*, JA 225 (1934) pp. 17, 43 (a very significant paper). The reader's attention may be drawn to the profusely illustrated but bibliographically deficient book by Aisaburo Akiyama, *Buddhist Hand-Symbol* (Yokohama, 1939).

<sup>9</sup> This detracts nothing from my appreciation of his "Fudō-Myōwō," *Open Court*, 29 (1915), pp. 513-26; here and in Murray's *Japan*, p. 43, are Siddha illustrations referring to Fudo.—*Acala* is semasiologically related to *akṣara*="letter," originally "indestructible"; cf. Hōbōgiri (1929), p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine* (1932), p. 268 speaks of Dhāraṇīs as meaningless words. "The Dhāraṇīs which were mostly meaningless strings of words were . . . later on shortened into equally unintelligible Mantras and Vijamantras"; B. Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography* (1924), p. XVII. Cf. his article "What a deity represents," *Indian Hist. Quarterly*, 9 (1933), pp. 40-45; in same volume, pp. 1-10, Winternitz treats the Tantras with moderate judgment, repeated in his *Hist. of Ind. Lit.*, 2 (1933), pp. 398; 3 (German ed. 1922), p. 634 f.—H. H. Wilson, *As. Researches*, 16 (1828), p. 478 is worthy of recalling. "The Bījas thus have a meaning," is the final sentence of chapter 26 "Bīja Mantras" in J. G. Woodroffe's (Arthur Avalon's) *The Garland of Letters* (Varnamālā) (1922), p. 243; cf. 73.—Hauer's translation of Dhāraṇī by "Meditationsstütze" is to the point.

<sup>11</sup> *Ancient Buddhism in Japan* (1928-35), pp. 159, 520 ff.

practical hints gradually emerged. Adding them<sup>12</sup> to my own observations I submit the following results :

- (1) A large percentage demonstrates the choice of the first letter of the first or last syllable with or without the nasal or exhaling sound (*h* Visarga) as last letter. Examples : *ī* Indra, *a* Agni, *bhai* Bhaiṣajya, the Medicine Buddha ; *yaṃ* Yama ; *jaḥ* Vajrarāja.
- (2) Much less frequently middle parts or two syllables of the same are taken. Examples : *nta(m)* Samantabhadra ; *Śa(h) ga(h)* Gaṇeśa.
- (3) Instead of the original name a synonym or an attributive word can be taken. Examples : *dhīḥ* for *prajñā* (both mean "intellect, intuition")<sup>13</sup> ; *bhaḥ* for Buddha (the first syllable plus Visarga of *bhagavat* "blessed venerable") ; *ī* for Śiva (from *Īśvara*, *Īśāna* "Lord").
- (4) The *bījas* of a good many saints, etc., are syllables whose mystic strength has been believed in since thousands of years. It suffices to mention *om* and *hūm*, particularly known from the common prayer *Om maṇi padme hūm*.<sup>14</sup> A document of the last Dalai Lama emphasizes that Sanskrit is the language of the gods. From the Tibetan view point Sanskrit is not sanctified, because it is the language of the Veda, but the Veda should be regarded as holy, because it is handed down in the language of the gods. And as the Tibetans hold in respect the Sanskrit quite so the Mongols the Tibetan language. Examples : *hām* and *mām* for *Fudō* ; they appear as last syllables of his mantras.<sup>15</sup>
- (5) Other choices depend upon the fact that a specific quality is ascribed to each letter of the Indian alphabet. Exact enumerations of them have been known from remote times ; probably the oldest is preserved in the epic legend of Buddha's life, the *Lalita Vistara* (IIInd century A.D.), chapter X. Here the syllables don't pertain to divine names, but to the principal points of doctrine, *dharma mukhas*. Such lists were obviously subjected to alterations while Buddhism spread out into foreign countries. Thus the mnemotechnic and onomatopoetic elements lost much of their former preponderance. Cp. S. Lévi, *BEFEO* 4 (1904), pp. 573-9.

Manifestly borrowed from the *Lalita Vistara* is "Shidda : Résumé historique de la transmission des quatre explications données sur le sanscrit," published by Ymaizoumi

<sup>12</sup> Finot, pp. 10, 15, 53 f., 67 f., 75. Rhymes and repetitions are also stressed here ; erroneously F. denies phonetical impulse, *sum* for *Sumeru* can be considered no exception. An insufficient beginning was F. G. Muller-Buck, *Die Japanischen Schwerter, Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie*, 13 (1881) p. (296)—where the useful hint of Ernst Kuhn ought not to be overlooked—and 14 (1882), pp. 30-50. *Orientalisches Archiv*, 2 (1911), p. 91 ; The author praises Siebold's publication without profiting by it.

The specimens of *bījas* here given are not selected exclusively from Butsu-zō-zui. I hope to finish a translation of all those 366 signs in the Butsu-zō-zui editions with a commentary for which I look forward to Prof. Ferd. Lessing's co-operation.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Foucher II, pp. 82 f., and H. Jacobi's translation of the *Trīṃśikāvijñapti* (1932), pp. 25 f. Another elucidating example is *ra(m)*, the *bīja* of *Sūrya* (the Sun) and *Agni* taken from *rakta* "Red." This *bīja* of the God of Fire is kept even in Tibet and Mongolia ; now everything becomes clear in *Finot* pp. 24, 27 ; Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung* (1942), pp. 124, 153 ff., and N. Poppe, *Asia Major*, 2 (1925), pp. 134, f., 139. May be Bhattacharyya's analysis of *hrīmḥ* and *trīm* (r signifying fire) started from the same point (*Sādhana-mālā*, II, p. L XXII).

<sup>14</sup> *Maṇi* is characteristically Atharvanic : M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda* (1899), p. 69.—On the mystic sanctity of inscribed Sanskrit letters see S. Lévi, *Ind. Ant.*, 33 (1904), p. 172.

<sup>15</sup> Predilection for long syllables (and the Visarga) increased ; it is shown by the *yantras* (diagrams on metal, etc.) of Raghunandana's time (XVIth century) ; cf. R. C. Hazra, *Ind. Hist. Quarterly*, 9 (1933), pp. 686 ff. It hardly seems necessary to enlist *hūm* instead of *hūm* in the Errata of Bhattacharya, *Sādhana-mālā*, II, p. 634. The two forms generally alternate.



Yamata, *Annales du Musée Guimet I*, p. 323 ff. (1880 ; this volume is of lasting value for the history of French Oriental studies and museums). The essay although deficient in several items, remains useful for the first part of *Annales II* (1881) containing (a) F. Max Muller, "Textes sanscrits découverts au Japon, pp. 1-37 ; (b) O-mi-to-king ou Soukhavati-Vyouha-Soutra d'après la version chinoise de Koumarajiva, " traduit du chinois par Imaizoumi et Yamata," pp. 39-64 (pp. 45-64 Texte sanscrit (in *Siddha letters*) du Soukhavati-Vyouha-Soutra). Cp. L. de Milloué, *Actes du 6e Congrès Int. des Or. III*, 2 (1885), pp. 181-97.

In Śāntideva's *Śikṣa-Samuccaya* the passage "To some they teach by words in separated syllables . . . in all manner of languages . . ." (translation by Bendall Rouse (1922), p. 295) also depends, though indirectly, on the *Lalita Vistara*. The author of the *Lalita Vistara* was most probably a native of Gandhāra, the same province of India where the Buddha image originated after that of the Bodhisattva had been created in Mathurā.

Our Siddha system reaches a climax in the Japanese *Mandara* pictures. They are, indeed, cosmotheistic. *Mandara* is the same as Skr. *Mandala* "circle." A pair of these paintings kept in the Boston Museum (11.7113/4) was published in 1917 by Anesaki, 1935 by Coomaraswamy.<sup>16</sup> They represent the circle of seed, the mandala of bijas : Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in strictly hierarchical order are replaced by letter-symbols which penetrate the universe with all their spiritual vigour. The representation of the phenomenal world cognizable to our senses, has its counterpart in that of the indestructible noumenal world. Hundreds of Siddha letters invite us to make them materialise into anthropomorphic images. Luckily we are spared such a Sisyphus work,<sup>17</sup> by H. Minamoto, *An Illustrated History of Japanese Art*, transl. from the Japanese by H. G. Henderson (1935), plates 54 and 55 ; see also *Kokka* 547 (June 1936), plates 2-4. They are entirely congruent with the Boston pictures. Thus the adept's mind succeeds to obtain by a meditative process the oneness with the supreme principle of the world—a rebirth of the Brāhman (neuter !), that precious goal of Indian metaphysics.

Abel Remusat was, I believe, the first European to comment on a sacred Indian language by the name of *Fan* used in Chinese Buddhist books.<sup>18</sup> From his statement<sup>19</sup> made in 1811, von Siebold deduced a general equality of *Fan* and *Shittan*. That goes too far, the equality holds true in special cases only. *Fan* serves as name for India, the abode of God Brāhmā, and for the Brāhmī script, initiated by him, the creator.<sup>20</sup> In the

<sup>16</sup> M. Anesaki, *Buddhist Art Studies*, plate 16 ; Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, plate 9 ; also A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* (1928), plate 16 (the frontispiece is an analogous Nepalese picture comprehensively analysed by J. Deniker, pp. 179-81 ; L.L. II).

<sup>17</sup> Besides it is harassing that each god has several bijas and vice versa the same bija is applied to several gods. The syllable *a* is common to a great many deities ; it is the mother of all the other 49 sounds, the first and foremost. They are spread out over the invoker's body, the heart being reserved for *a*. Cp. M. W. de Visser, pp. 173 f., and my note 28.

<sup>18</sup> The "Characteres sacri, quos Sinae a Brachmanibus acceperunt . . .", 36 letters over the picture of Avalokiteśvara in Athanasius Kircher's *China . . . illustrata* (Amstelodami, 1667), p. 141, are distorted Devanagari. More correct are the five plates "De Literis Brachmanum," p. 162, for which he enjoyed the assistance of the Jesuit father Heinrich Roth who devoted the years 1650-1660 to the study of Sanskrit and Indian creeds in Central India. Cf. Th. Zachariae, *Kleine Schriften* (1920), p. 2 ; 387. All this has nothing to do with Siddha script.

<sup>19</sup> *Magasin encyclopédique* of Oct., 1811, quoted, in his "Recherches sur les langues tartares," I (1820), p. 373.

<sup>20</sup> Brāhmā also created the Kharoṣṭhi script—and devoured all the 72 letters. *A* and *u*, the legend goes on, dropped from the corners of his mouth ; that is why they are paid deep reverence as royal sounds : *Hōbōgirin* (1929), p. 34. This is apparently in the line of the explanations of holy *om* (*a+u+m*). Is that story the source of the amusing variants of the tale narrating how several tribes of Farther India lost (or forgot) the art of writing (*Im Stromgebiet des Irawaddy* (1922), pp. 117 ff.) ?—See also *Hōbōgirin*, pp. 113 ff. (*Bon*, *Brāhmā*, etc.).

*Lalita Vistara* this Brāhmī is the first amongst 64 writings with which young Buddha (Siddhārtha) proves himself familiar to the surprise of all the listeners. The Japanese change *Fan* to *Bon* and call all the *Siddha* marks on swords, etc. (see above) *bonji* "Indian Letters." Incidentally, could not the *Mangala* (auspicious sign) writing that occupies the seventh place in the list refer to a forefather of our Siddha?

In his "Notes Chinoises sur l'Inde" (*BEFEO* 4 (1904), pp. 557 f.) Sylvain Lévi had made conspicuous the existence of Mediæval Siddha (Si-t'an) schools occupied with the investigation of the mystic bases of Sanskrit letters. Aided by him and Paul Pelliot, P. C. Bagchi edited, 1929-1937, *Deux Lexiques sanskrit chinois*, with transliteration and a French translation. The author of one of them is the celebrated pilgrim I-tsing who studied in India 671-695 A.D.<sup>21</sup> Bagchi uses throughout Japanese editions of the XVIIIth century. As to this Japanese mediation it is worth mentioning that Jakumyō, the editor of I-tsing's first printed edition (1927), calls himself a *Śramana* of *Yogayāna*, i.e. a mendicant friar adherent to the Yoga school. Still greater weight must be attached to the fact that he displays the Hōryūji palm-leaves as the model from which his types had been manufactured. These glossaries have most likely been compiled for merchants and travellers. They illustrate thereby the interest, in China, in the Siddha alphabet<sup>22</sup> from the side of people outside the clerical profession and not connected with the religious service. That China in the latter regard was the teacher of Japan is evident. Of Kōbō-Daishi<sup>23</sup> two merits are stressed: First he started the Shittan writing in Japan; the print he began with was a Dhāraṇī in honour of Avalokiteśvara (similar texts are the earliest extant printed material: four Dhāraṇīs printed by order of the Empress Shotoku between the years 768 and 770).<sup>24</sup> Secondly he continued to use Shittan for the Shingon sect whose doctrines had been popular in China since 719 when Vajrabodhi, a Brahman from Southern India, commenced to propagate them. The sect was named Chenyen; this term as well as Japanese Shingon, are equivalent to Sanskrit mantra.

Sylvain Lévi's contribution to the *Feestbundel* . . . . *Batav. Gen. v. Kunsten en Wet.* II (1929), pp. 100-108, dealing with the syllable *ysa* at first seemed to endanger the whole chronological construction. He took an intense interest in an alphabet named after its first five syllable-letters *Arapacana*, knowledge of which was brought to China by Amoghavajra in the VIIIth century A.D. In a circle of 42 letters *ysa* appears on the

<sup>21</sup> Title: *Fan yu ts'ien tsen wen: The thousand Sanskrit and Chinese words*. Pelliot doubted that I-tsing is the author.—Furthermore Bagchi's volumes contain *Fan yu tsa ming*, compiled by Li-yen, a Śramana of Kuchā, shortly before his death (between 789 and 795). His source was a Sanskrit vocabulary used in Central Asia, probably of the VIIth century, repeatedly revised. An appendix to it is *Fan T'ang siao si* (Bagchi's trsl. "Nouvelles ou informations sino-sanskrites"), a little dictionary of 310 words, compiled before 884 by an unknown author.

Bagchi intended to write a study on the Siddha characters of these books, but in Calcutta lacked the Japanese literature needed for such a task.

<sup>22</sup> On the meaning of Chinese *Si-tan chang* cf. T. Watters, *Yuan Chwang's Travels* A (1904), pp. 155 f. A. F. R. Hoernle, *JRAS*, 1911, pp. 450 ff. See also *Hōbōgirin*, p. 222.

<sup>23</sup> Kobo-Daishi's instructor was, until 806 A.D., the Chinese Tantra authority Hui-Kuo; cf. W. Gundert, *Jap. Religionsgeschichte* (1935), pp. 56 ff. (plate X has Siddha characters without explanation). His contemporary was Lūyī (Luipa), "the first Siddhacārya," a native of Uḍḍiyāna, cf. *Finot*, p. 5 (with bibliographical references.)

If Uḍḍiyāna is really to be located in Assam (B. Bhattacharya, *Sādhana-mālā* II, pp. XXXVIIff.) there must have been two centres of black art; for the fame of the wonderland Gandhāra whose Udyāna province was formerly unanimously identified with Uḍḍiyāna, is almost proverbial; cf. O. Franke, *ZDMG* 47 (1893), p. 597 and H. Lüders, *ib.* 93 (1939), p. 9 (highly interesting article on the Vidyādhara known in pre-Christian Buddhist art).

Tantric influence exercised upon Buddhist art is described by L. Bachhofer, *Ostas. Zeitscher*, 24 (1938), pp. 74 ff.

<sup>24</sup> S. Sakanishi's review of K. Kawase, *Studies in the old movable type printing in Japan* (written in Japanese), *JAOS* 59 (1939), p. 147.



fourth-last place. Lévi opines that this ligature used in Khotan and Kuchā had been already incorporated by the Hindus at the time when India was eager to colonize, and assimilated her alphabet to Central Asian demands. He thinks that this happened between 100 B.C. and 100 A.D., and is inclined to ascribe to the same epoch the invention of the alphabet for Buddhist mysticism.

Lévi does not say a word about these Siddha texts published by Max Muller and the Japanese scholars. Yet the *Arapacana* characters without the shade of any doubt reveal the same type. How can we imagine that the Siddha alphabet was based on such an incomplete set as the *Arapacana* that lacks so indispensable sounds as *a i i u ū r ṛ ḷ e o au ṇ jh ñ h* besides a lot of ligatures? <sup>25</sup> Could the Siddha texts have operated with such a cruelly crippled instrument? Surely not; to reduce the vowels to a single sound on one hand and to take in a multitude of groups of consonants on the other hand is an absurd way of creating an alphabet. The *Arapacana* circle reproduced on Lévi's plate almost resembles that Atharva-Upaniṣad which composes a text from a normally understandable litany that is broken up into syllables and letters. Which deity is invoked we learn from the syllable *vaṃ* in the centre of the circle and from the beginning with *a ra pa ca na*<sup>26</sup>: (Mahā) vairocana<sup>27</sup> and Mañjusrī are summoned. *Ysa* is a linguistic innovation of the Śaka sphere; many of the Dhāraṇī translators came from those cities in Chinese Turkeṣṭān. For further details I refer to the elaborate study of Konow, *The Arapacana Alphabet and the Sakas*, *Acta Orientalia* 12 (1934), pp. 13-24; F. W. Thomas, *BDMG* 91 (1937), pp. 1-48. See also *Hōbōgirin* 1 (1929), p. 34, s.v. *Arahashana*.

Tibetan Lamaism is a fertile soil for such organisms as *bīja*, *dhāraṇī*, etc. Had the *Siddha* writing been implanted simultaneously? Not in the strictest sense, as far as I know; in any case the shape of the "visualizing syllables" printed in W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga* (1935), pp. 124, 191 f., and *passim* is a blend of ordinary Devanāgarī, Siddha, and Tibetan. The majority of the mantras of the *vajradhātu*-Mandala (G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica* 3, (1935), p. 38) is an obvious combination of the name of the deity with *om* preceding and the *bīja* following (e.g., *om Vajraketu bhrīh*). On another Mandala (*ib.* 3, 2 (1936), pp. 56 ff.) *bījas* consisting of two or three syllables are to be transfigured into the deity by contemplation (e.g., *ma hi* into Vairocana). The rites are different for the *bāhya pūja*—exoteric, for the public in general—and the *ādhyātmikapūja*—esoteric, for spiritually advanced individuals (*ib.* 3, 1, pp. 53 f.).

Satis Chandra Vidyabhuṣana, *Sriḍ-pa-ho*: a Tibeto-Chinese Tortoise Chart of Divination, *Mem. ASB* 5, 1 (1918), pp. 1-11, makes intelligible the Tibetan picture of *Ruṣ-sbal* (frog of bones tortoise): Mañjusrī transformed himself into a tortoise to enable the Chinese to draw omens from its body. The diagram of the tortoise must have been imported from China before 1026 A.D. The charms are written in Tibetan with an admixture of corrupt Sanskrit; the mystic Sanskrit sentences are believed by the Tibetans to be full of meanings which are known only to the Nāgas (serpent gods). A mortal can attempt to explain them only at the risk of losing his head and other limbs (p. 1). The Hindu Tāntrikas used *kūrmacakra* (tortoise wheel) as a source of divination; there are Tantric

<sup>25</sup> *Levi*, p. 102 read *ā* for *a*; in the classification (next to last paragraph) read 21 for 23 and 26 for 25. The *Arapacana* circle has by mistake *śva* for *sva* (evidence by Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, p. 1946). The ductus is in my opinion unquestionably younger than that of the Hōryūji alphabet.—L.'s paper has been reprinted with "Note additionnelle" in *Memorial Sylvain Lévi* (1937), p. 355-63.

<sup>26</sup> Reminiscent somehow of the cabalistic word *Abracadabra* which is, I assume, patched up from *a, b, c, d* of the alphabet.

<sup>27</sup> According to *Hōbōgirin*, p. 9 the highest Buddha Vairocana appears, it is said, as Agni in order to convert the followers of this Vedic god of fire. See also R. Tajima, *Étude sur le Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (1936).

rules for drawing omens from a tortoise spread over the different parts of whose body<sup>28</sup> Sanskrit letters are arranged in a peculiar order (p. 2). On the belly and below the tortoise the *Spar-kha* with its charm, subduing all diseases, is represented; in the inner circle of the text (see plate, below left) are 50 letters from *a* to *kṣaḥ* (p. 4)—the usual Siddha number in contrast to the 29 consonants and 5 vowels of the Tibetan plan. On the plate we see Lantsa and common Tibetan characters but no Siddha ones.<sup>29</sup> S. C. Vidyabhuṣana and S. C. Das (*Dictionary*, p. 798) ought to have added that *Spar-kha* is nothing else but *Yang-Yin*, the symbolic combination familiar to anyone in China!<sup>30</sup>

In concluding we feel tempted to ask whether the history of civilization reveals any prototype of the Siddha conception, or any continuous line connecting the written or spoken sound<sup>31</sup> with the training of the contemplating mind. Unhesitatingly we can answer in the affirmative.<sup>32</sup> The syllable *om*, sacrosanct itself and opening holy texts, may have been the first note of the earliest incantation ever muttered in India. Later the finishing *hūm* comparable to (but not etymologically identical with) our *Amen*<sup>33</sup> was joined. To the Vedic age go back also the salutation *Svāhā* and the cosmogonic expounding of the deified speech (*Vāc*) partaking in the creation.<sup>34</sup> I agree with Geldner that the Rigvedic hymn X, 125 in honour of this goddess preconceives the speculation on the nature of Ātman-Brahman; the identification of these two terms, in my humble opinion, was not supposed to demonstrate a simple tautology, but the unity of Man and Universe, of microcosm and macrocosm. The theory of the eternity of sound argues with a priest-like logic as follows: "If the Veda, the holy Bible of India, is to be regarded as something uncreated, then the connection of the words of which the Veda is composed, with their meaning could not be the result of human activity, but the words, and in the last resort the sounds that form the words, must have existed from all eternity" (R. Garbe, *ERE* 8 (1916), p. 648). This doctrine and the other of the mysterious entity of *sphoṭa*, a sort of primordial substance from which the sound arises, belong to the problems Indian philosophers never become tired to deal with.<sup>35</sup> The sacred syllables emitted in utmost elation are lifted to become gods—what wonder: following their transfiguration into metaphysical beings they possess potential energies and sparkle in the brilliant rays of the gloriole of Brahmā-Amitābha.

<sup>28</sup> A strict parallel to the *Nayāṣas* which consist of placing the fingertips and the palm of the right hand on the various parts of the body, whilst reciting certain mantras, in order thus to imbue one's body with the life of the Deṇi; Winternitz, *Hist. of Ind. Lit.* I (1927), p. 595; cf. A. Weber, *Die Rāmā-tāpanīya-Up.*, Abhandl. Ak., Wiss., Berlin, 1864, pp. 292 ff., 302 ff. and *Indische Studien* 2, p. 316; P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads* (1897), pp. 813 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Lantsa and Siddha are confused with each other by M. W. de Visser, *The Bodhisattva Tī-tsang* (1913), p. 163, and C. Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism* 3 (1921), p. 301. I have doubts concerning A. Grünwedel, *Die Legenden des Nāropa* (1933), p. 241.

<sup>30</sup> The indispensable contributions to Tibetan folklore for which we are indebted to Grünwedel, Waddell (written in their zenith before they indulged in risky comparisons) and well-balanced F. W. Thomas, need no bibliographical references.

<sup>31</sup> *Akṣara* is primarily a sound syllable, and only secondarily a written sign: Coomaraswamy, *HJAS*, 1939, p. 1788. Cp. P. M. Modi, *Akṣara: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Indian Philosophy* (1932).

<sup>32</sup> I do not agree with Winternitz's dictum that there is no line of evolution from the Atharvaveda and Yajurveda to the Tantras (*Ind. Hist. Quarterly*, 9 (1933), p. 8). It was of great consequence that Dhāraṇīs, etc., had the same attraction for Brahmanists, Jains and Buddhists; about Jainism cf. E. Leumann, *Actes du 6<sup>e</sup> Congrès Int. des Orientalistes* (Leiden, 1883), vol. 3, 2 (1885), pp. 558 ff.; J. Burgess, *Ind. Antiquary*, 13 (1884), pp. 2 f., 9; 32 (1903), pp. 459 ff. with plate IV. H. V. Glasenapp, *Der Jainismus* (1925), pp. 370 ff.

<sup>33</sup> See H. Revel, *Universal Jewish En cycl.* I (1939), pp. 223 f.

<sup>34</sup> As for the basic idea cp. K. Vossler's ingenious article "Über das Verhältnis von Sprache und Religion": *Die neueren Sprachen*, 28 (1920), p. 97-112.

<sup>35</sup> See H. Jacobi, *Mīmāṃsā, Indian Studies*... Lanman (1929), pp. 146 ff.; 158 f. and Ashoknath Shastri, *Sūnya and Brahman*, *Indian Culture*, Jan. 1939, pp. 276 f.—Edition of the *Sphoṭasiddhi* in Madras Univ. Skr. Series VI (1931).

## TIBETAN BOOK-COVERS

By PROF. G. TUCCI

TIBETAN books, either printed or handwritten, are usually wrapped up in some cloth, placed between two rectangular pieces of wood of the same size, and then properly tied up by means of a strip, generally a leather strip, called *t'ag pa*, the decoration consisting, in this case, of paintings or of carvings. As a rule, the paintings are made on the inner side of the book-cover as is the case with the Nepalese manuscripts; the carvings, on the contrary, are cut in the outer surface of the upper small plank. It is therefore evident that these book-covers, called in Tibetan *glegs šin* (*glegs bam šin*), are nothing else but a Tibetan adaptation of the Indian *pālaka*<sup>1</sup>. In the case of the painted *glegs šin* the derivation from the Indian and specially Nepalese models is evident; as to the carved ones, no Indian specimen is known to me.

As a rule, though exceptions are frequently met, the carved book-covers are reserved for the volumes of the bKa' agyur or that part of the bKa' agyur which is called the Yum c'en mo, Prajñāpāramitā, generally found in every temple and even in the private chapels of the well-to-do families. It should be noted in this connection that the volumes of the bKa' agyur either printed or handwritten are of bigger size than those of the bsTan agyur. Even the new Lhasa edition published by order of the late Dalai Lama<sup>2</sup> strictly follows this rule. This practice can be traced to fairly old times. I may quote, for instance, the manuscript copies of the bKa' agyur and of the bsTan agyur, preserved in Ža lu and written in the times of Bu ston rin po c'e (born 1290), those of the Sa kya monastery or the beautiful sets of Toling and Tsaparang, some of which go certainly back to the times of the kings of Guge (XI-XVIth centuries). If we except the complete collections of the holy texts of the great monasteries, such as those of Sa skya or Ža lu, contemporary with the Mongol emperors, in older times we are chiefly confronted with special sections of the revelation, the Prajñāpāramitā or the Ratnakūṭa prevailing upon other parts. In the beginning of Lamaism we are not entitled, in fact, to speak of complete sets of the bKa' agyur, but only of separate sections chosen according to the spiritual inclination of the teachers dwelling in the monasteries. Later on, these sections were arranged into an organic body called the bKa' agyur. The first redaction of a complete set of the revelation as transmitted in Tibet took place at the times of the Mongol emperors. The first attempt at such a redaction was encouraged, according to a tradition preserved by Buston<sup>3</sup> and the Deb t'er sñon po, by bTsun pa aJam dbyaṅs, a pupil of sKyo ston. He was the chaplain of Buyantu khan (1312-1320) and sent to dBus pa bLo gsal the necessary means for collecting and copying the texts of the bKa' agyur and bsTan agyur to be then deposited in the temple of sNar t'añ. Accordingly, dBus pa bLo gsal byaṅ c'ub ye šes, assisted by the lotsāva bSod nams 'od zer and Byaṅ c'ub abum

<sup>1</sup> The same happens with the Bonpos; these hold that the *gsun rten*, viz. the holy books, have six ornaments: material (rdsas), meditation (tiñ adsin), formulae (sñags), mudrā (p'yag rgya), explanation (ts'ig bsad), logic connection (abrel par sbyor), the "material" being *glegs šin*, *glegs t'ag*, *glegs bam*, book cover, stripe, book. See; *gsen rab nam par rgyal ba yid bzin gyi nor bu* p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> This edition in one hundred volumes was published a few years before the death of the Dalai lama; it is neatly printed but generally not very correct. It was printed in the Nor gliñ bskaḥ bzañ p'o brañ.

<sup>3</sup> *bsTan agyur gyi dkar c'ag yid bzin nor bu dñan gi rgyal poi p'ren* p. 4a; cfr. Huth, *Geschichte des Buddhismus in Mongolei*, II, p. 165 and specially *Deb t'er sñon po*, vol. ca, p. 5b.

sought for the supplementary texts (*p'yi mo*) of the bKa' agyur and of the bsTan agyur and adding them to the books commonly accepted as authoritative, placed the two sets in the aJam lha k'añ of sNar t'añ. The set of sNar t'añ was the original upon which were based the copies made for Grom pa, Sa skya, K'ab guñ t'añ in Upper Tibet and for Ts'al guñ t'añ in Lower Tibet. The definite redaction of the bsTan agyur or rather its revision was the work of Bu ston rin po c'e, who deposited the texts collated by him in the Ža lu bsTan agyur lha k'añ where they are still preserved. From the Ža lu copy many others derived, such as those of bKra šis lhun po at the time of dGe adun grub.<sup>4</sup> Laufer,<sup>5</sup> on the authority of the translation of the *History of Buddhism in Mongolia*, made by Huth (II, p. 165) seems to believe that these redactions were printed. But in the text there is no statement to support this view. Nam mk'a' arig pai rdo rje says only that aJam dbyaṅs sent the necessary things for "bḥeṅs" the bKa' agyur and the bsTan agyur; the word *bḥeṅs* refers to any kind of dedication of all sorts of religious objects. In this case evidently it means that a copy of the holy scriptures was duly prepared and offered to the temple; in the text there is no mention of any printing (for which the usual term is: *par, par rgyab*); in fact the set of the bsTan agyur preserved in Ža lu is manuscript.

While Buston revised the copy, thus collected, of the bsTan agyur, another scholar and political man, who was the rival of P'ag mo gru pa, I mean Ts'al pa Kun dga' rdo rje and himself the author of a chronicle, Hulan deb t'er (from mongol *Ulan-red*), also known as Deb dmar, subjected the bKa' agyur to the same revision; this was the basis of the later edition of sNar t'añ. Of course I speak here only of the Tibetan translations of the bKa' agyur and its parts, but I am not dealing with the collections of the holy texts written in other languages and frequently met in the monasteries of Tibet during the Mongol times, which were certainly bound according to the custom of the country from where they came. Sanscrit originals were of course, then, very common, as it is shown, even now, by their rests found in the monasteries of Sa skya, Ža lu and Nor; these libraries contained the most important sūtras and śāstras brought into Tibet from India and Nepal. Nor were the sanscrit texts the only non-Tibetan books to be met in Tibet. During the Mongol period we have notice of Chinese and even Uigur collections. In the Sa kya monastery, for instance, is partially preserved a Chinese set of the revelation printed on rolls of yellow paper dated June, 1256.<sup>6</sup>

As regards the Uigur collection a reference to it is contained in the guide-book of the monastery of Sa skya but unfortunately, as I was told by the lamas of the place, it was enclosed a few years ago in a mc'od rten built near the Lha k'añ c'en mo.<sup>7</sup>

Let us come back to the copies of the bKa' agyur and to the wooden book covers used for its volumes. The first thing which we notice is, as we said before, that the size of these volumes is bigger than that of the bsTan agyur. As a rule they are made of a very thick paper often coloured with indigo (*nīla, sñon po*) upon which texts were copied in gold or silver; otherwise Chinese ink was used. But in some cases, evidently under Chinese

<sup>4</sup> *bKa' agyur yons rdsogs kyi lun legs par t'ob pai t'ob yig t'ar pai t'em shas* by Kloñ rdol bla ma, complete works, vol. dsa.

<sup>5</sup> Laufer, *Dokumente der indischen Kunst, Das Citralakṣaṇa*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>6</sup> According to the colophon appended to each chapter it appears that this copy of the holy scriptures was made by order of Chang tsung lu, his wife Wang Tsung hui and their daughter Chang. They were inhabitants of Lu lung fang to the south of Peking and had the scriptures copied and then placed in a box to be deposited in the temple Ta pao chi in Peking.

This was done in order that the emperor and the imperial family might prosper. The emperor is Mongau, Munge (Hien-tsung, 1251-1259). This copy is therefore anterior to the collection made by order of Qhubilai (Se chen, Shi tsu, 1264-1295).

<sup>7</sup> On the Uigur copy of the scriptures see the guide book of Sa skya; *gDan sa c'en po dpal ldan Sa skyañ gtsug lag k'an dan rten gsum gi dkar c'ag*, fol. 7.

influence, the holy texts were written on rolls of paper, not on leaves. This shows that the practice referred to by S. Ch. Das and Laufer<sup>8</sup> was not restricted to official documents only ; to quote an example out of the many which occur to me, we know that in the monastery of gNas gсар, not very far from Gyantse, many texts, whose catalogue has been preserved, are said to have been written upon *šog dril*, viz. rolls of paper.<sup>9</sup> But certainly this was an exception, the rule being the rectangular thick leaves of paper. Why, then, did the Tibetans use for the two Buddhist encyclopaedias two different sizes ?

In the Nepalese collections there is no trace of the sūtras being of larger dimension than the *prakaraṇas*, viz. the commentaries and the treatises by the Buddhist ācāryas and doctors. The manuscripts of the Prajñāpāramitā for instance are in Nepal as large as any other book ; nor was it possible to do differently, since the palm-leaves are generally of the same breadth. On the other hand the manuscripts of Toling and Tabo which are the oldest specimens known to me have two holes in each page, often surrounded by red circles ; these, which were presumably never used, can be explained as an imitation of Indian models ; here in fact these holes are meant for the string which keeps the leaves tied together.

We may therefore surmise that the larger size of the bKa' agyur is based upon an Indian corresponding use. Most probably the country for which we have to look for in this connection is Kashmir, where, instead of palm-leaves, bark of birch-tree was employed for manuscripts. Kashmir greatly influenced the renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet ; specially Western Tibet owes a great deal not only to its pandits who were the teachers of Rin c'en bzañ po, the lotsāva of Zañs dkar and their pupils, but also to its artists. This was already suggested by me in my studies upon Western Tibetan art<sup>10</sup> and will more elaborately be shown in my forthcoming volume on Tibetan painting. Be it as it may, it is certain that the oldest manuscripts of the bKa' agyur or of the Yum c'en mo in the monasteries of Western Tibet are generally protected by most beautiful carved *glegs šin*. These were of course made when the donors presented the monastery itself with sets of the holy scriptures in order to acquire religious merit for themselves or for their relatives.

During my travels, I tried my very best to get some specimens of these *glegs šin* and though it is very difficult to persuade the lamas to part with them,<sup>11</sup> I succeeded.

A first group is represented by Nos. I, II, III, IV. These may be considered as the oldest specimens. Nos. I and II come from Tabo, No. III from Toling, No. IV from Nako.<sup>12</sup>

No. I (fig 1) represents in the centre the Yum c'en mo (Prajñāpāramitā) ; she has four arms ; to her left Śākyamuni on a throne in *bhūmisparśamudrā* ; to her right Don yod grub pa.

<sup>8</sup> Laufer : *Der Roman einer Tibetischen Königin*, p. 3 ; S. CH. Das in *JRASB*, 1904, vol. 73, p. I. The chapters of the *Pañ ma bka' t'an* discovered by the various *gter ston* were written on rolls of yellow paper *šog dril*.

<sup>9</sup> This catalogue is contained in the *Myan c'un* a history of gTsañ, upon which see : Tucci, *Indo-tibetica*, vol. IV, Part I, p. 42. The expression used here, p. 156, is as in the *gter ma* : *šog dril*. All this and the rolls found in Central Asia seem to point out that under the ancient kings of Tibet the use of rolls of paper, due to Chinese and Central-Asian influence, was fairly common ; later it gave way to the Indian fashion. gNas gсар or rTsis gnas gсар is so called to distinguish it from gNas rñin. (Tucci : *Indo-Tibetica*, IV. Part I, p. 66.) See there the Tibetan explanation of rTsis which is rather the name of the district. Bacot (*La vie de Marpa*, p. 8) translates rTsis *le neuf*.

<sup>10</sup> *Indo-Tibetica*, voll. I-IV.

<sup>11</sup> The great reverence with which Tibetans handle the books is well known. They consider the book even if it does not contain the revelation, as *gsun rten*, the verbal body of the Buddha. The book is the provisional support of the eternal truth and, as such, it should be most respectfully treated ; this explains the prescriptions to be met with in the religious literature regarding the handling of books ; see for instance *bKa' t'an sde lna*, chap. na p. 34 ff.

<sup>12</sup> On these places see Tucci-Ghersi : *Secrets of Tibet*, London, 1935.

In the remaining space are carved 12 small images of Buddhas whose hands are in one of the fundamental mudrās.

No. II (fig. 2) is a variety of No. I, the only difference being that Śākyamuni is surrounded by the standing figures of his two most prominent disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. The small images filling the space raise to the number of 21.

The treatment of the throne in both cases is the same. In the space between the pedestal and the upper transverse bar, the figure of the *vyālaka* is drawn, which, in most cases, is similar to a horse, but in the image of Don yod grub pa, in No. II, is similar to a lion. The transverse bar ends in a knob which appears to be ungrooved against the almost general rule of Bengali art. The throne is surmounted by a Garuḍa.

We are therefore confronted with a type of throne whose ornamental motives are to be found since the times of Amarāvati and which travels with Buddhist art in places other than India such as Java, Burma and Tibet.<sup>13</sup>

No. III (fig. 3). In the middle there is a Jam dpal ṅbyaṅs (Arapacana) on *padmāsana*, resting upon a sacred pot (*kumbha*) out of which two sprouts of lotus spring forth and bending to right and left become the support of the smaller images of the Buddha on the top. To the left P'yag na pad ma and Byams pa; to the right rDorje sems dpa' and sGrol ma.

Except the central image the other gods have no throne, but are surrounded by a frame whose borders consist of leaves.

No. IV (fig. 4). The images carved in this book-cover represent the *rigs lña*, the five supreme Buddhas: rNam par snañ mdsad in the centre, to the left Mi bskyod pa and Rin c'en byuñ ldan, to the right Ts'e dpag med and Don yod grub pa. On both sides of rNam pa snañ mdsad two standing bodhisattvas, two *ṣaṇ ṣaṇ* (Jīvanjīvaka) and then 16 small images of Buddhas are seen.

The first three of these specimens have in common some characters which point to an almost identical inspiration.

They, as I said before, are varieties of the same type and surely belong to the same school, though in No. III the artist gave the preference to the floreal ornamentation rather than to filling up the space with images.

The carved surface is framed by a garland of pearls which is interrupted, at regular intervals, by small flowers with four leaves each; these are neatly drawn in No. I, but rather roughly marked in the other cases.<sup>14</sup> Then comes, in the three specimens, a most gracious floreal motif which reminds us of similar designs bordering Pāla statues.

The same scheme is generally followed by the artist of No. IV though the images of gods are placed within *caitya*-windows. The outer border is here simpler than in the other examples and consists of lotus leaves only.

I am inclined to consider all these pieces to be of Indian make and to attribute them to the artists who, under the invitation of Rin c'en bzañ po came to Western Tibet from Kashmir or other Indian places, adorned the temples built by order of the kings of Guge and, carved the door pillars of those sanctuaries as can be seen in Tabo, Tsaparang, Toling and in Ladakh, in the Alchi monastery.<sup>15</sup> Most probably they worked even at these book covers when the same pious kings had sets of the most important texts of Buddhism

<sup>13</sup> On the *vyālaka* and its varieties see on: Bennet—Kempers: *The bronzes of Nālandā and Hindu Javanese-art*, Leiden, 1933.

<sup>14</sup> On this motif of the flower with four leaves placed at regular intervals see for instance: Vogel: *La Sculpture de Mathurā*, pl. XXXI; Longhurst, *The Buddhist antiquities of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* MASI, 1938, pl. XLIV.

<sup>15</sup> Tucci: *Santi e briganti nel Tibet ignoto*, Milano, 1937; door of Toling fig. to face page 144 (on the back); for Alchi see Francke: *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, pl. XXXIXa.



translated into Tibetan, copied and then placed in the temples erected under their auspices. The image of the Yum c'en mo upon two of these *glegs šin* shows that these were meant for a set of the Prajñāpāramitā particularly studied by Rin c'en bzañ po and his school.<sup>16</sup>

Nos. V and VI found in Toling belong to a different school.

No. V reacts, as it were, with its sober ornamentation and the classical simplicity of its volutes, to the baroque sumptuousness of the specimens studied above. While the deep carving gives, in this case, a plastic relief to the images with the beautiful play of shade and light in Nos. V and VI the cutting is rather flat.

The gods represented in No. V are the Buddha in the centre, rDo rje sems dpa' to the left, aJam dpal dbyaṅs to the right; in No. VI: Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* in the centre, aJam dpal dbyaṅs to the left, and sGrol ma to the right. (fig. 5) While in No. VI the Buddha is represented sitting upon a throne, in No. V he is enshrined in a chapel very similar in shape to those often found in the Nepalese manuscripts.

The beauty of these two *glegs šin* chiefly depends on the graceful interlacing of the volutes in which it is easy to recognize a reminiscence of hellenistic art; this is a motif in full swing in Pāla ornamentation; it, then, appears in some paintings of Western Tibet (Guge school) and reaches, evidently from Bengal, Nepal, where it is no rare decoration in the carved windows of the ancient buildings.

The delicacy of the design and of the carving, leaves no doubt that these specimens go back to the best period of Tibetan art. I am fully aware of the difficulty of dating any object in such an art as the Tibetan which is extremely traditional and strictly follows for centuries the same pattern; but the grace of the figures can easily stand the comparison with the best examples of the frescoes in the chapels of the *mc'od rien* of Tsaparang, sNar t'añ, Ža lu and Gyantse and, therefore, I am inclined to attribute them to the XVth century.

Nos. VII and VIII are equally good specimens of the Tibetan workmanship and can be considered as varieties of the same type; most certainly they belong to the same school. They were found in the monastery of Phyan dunkhar.<sup>17</sup>

No. VII represents in the centre Śākyamuni; to his left Śākyamuni again in *bhūmisparśamudrā* and Ts'e dpag med, with the vase of ambrosia, to the right. The remaining space is filled with small images of Buddhas in different *mudrās* and with floreal volutes.

While the central image and that to its left are supported by small figures of Atlas, the third to the right is placed upon the *agniśikhā*, the symbol of fire.

The artist was evidently inspired by the copper gilt images which he could daily admire in the temples. The throne has assumed the aspect of those *rgyab yol*—as the aureole is called in Tibetan—which in Nepalese and Tibetan art represent the usual support and background of all images and are an essential part of them.

While two of the *rgyab yol*, that in the centre and that to the left in No. VII, follow the scheme of the *vyālaka* mounted upon the elephant or a human figure<sup>18</sup> and of the *makara* on the transverse bar, that to the right is of a simpler kind; instead of the *vyālaka* and the elephant we have two pillars surmounted by two birds just as in some frescoes of Tabo.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> On Rin c'en bzañ po and his connections with the Prajñā, see Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica* II (Rin c'en bzañ po), p. 24, and *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> On this place see Tucci: *Santi e briganti*, p. 168 fl.

<sup>18</sup> For the central figure cfr. D. P. Chandra: *Medieval Indian sculpture*, pl. XX.

<sup>19</sup> For this image one may compare the corresponding figure in Tabo, Tucci: *Indo-Tibetica* III, p. I, pl. XLIX; for pillars coming out of the sacred pot containing the ambrosia, see *Ibid.* pl. LIII and LIV.

No. VIII is a variety of No. VII with the only difference that the place of the volutes is taken by small images of gods, 40 in all. There are the *rigs lña*, a Jam dpal, sPyan ras gzigs, P'yag na rdo rje (viz. the so-called : *rigs gsum mgon po*), sGrol ma, etc. The central deity is the Yum c'en mo, Śākyamuni is seen to her left and a sMan bla to her right. The *rgyab yol* of the central image and that to its left is of the *vyālaka* and elephant type; on that to the right the *vyālaka* jumps upon the figure of a man. In both cases the border is simpler than in the older specimens, the garland of pearls is less distinct; the lotus leaves arranged in a double row are not well drawn.

In No. VIII, four of the eight happy signs (*maṅgala*) are engraved at the four corners. Both specimens are very similar to that photographed by Francke at Leh.<sup>20</sup>

Nos. IX and X (fig. 6) represent an attempt at combining the two styles, the iconographic and the ornamental. In both cases the images of the Buddhas are enclosed in the most gracious play of volutes. In No. IX, certainly later than the other, the pearl-string is clearly engraved and the lotus leaves of the border carefully designed; rNam par snañ mdsad, the central deity of the cycle of the *rigs lña*, sits upon a throne of the simpler *vyālaka* type.

No. X is certainly later. It represents the *rigs lña* in monastic dress. The floreal motifs parting from the *bum pa* upon which the central figure sits envelop, as it were, the figures of the deities but are not so deeply engraved as in the other specimens. The style of this *glegs šin* strictly reminds us of certain frescoes of Tsaparang (fig. 7) in which the images of the gods are equally enclosed within the bent twigs of the tree, whose trunk acts as the throne of the Buddhas and which spreads around its copious branches embracing, as it were, in the play of their volutes, the mahāyāna pantheon; we may call it a Tibetan interpretation, so to say, of the tree of Jeṣse.<sup>21</sup>

No. XI was found in the monastery of Luk. It represents the cycle of the *rigs lña*, having as their *gtso bo*, or central deity, Mi bskyod pa. The sixth image first to the left is Śākyamuni.

The figures of the Buddhas are cut in open work.

The *rgyab yol* is reduced to its simplest scheme, being encircled by a garland of flowers and by an outer frame of lotus leaves; each Buddha is accompanied by his usual accolytes. The workmanship is purely Tibetan and certainly later than the other specimens.

So these book-covers reflect the same evolution of Tibetan art as shown by the frescoes on the walls of the temples and by painting in general. All of them, in fact, have in those paintings, specially in those of Tsaparang and Toling, their perfect counterpart. They derive from Indian models and it seems that they were introduced into Tibet during the second diffusion (*p'yi dar*) of Buddhism, which took place at the times of Ye šes 'od and his pious successors; most probably the way by which they entered Tibet was Kashmir, a country which greatly contributed to the cultural progress of Guge. While the oldest specimens here studied betray a great analogy with the wood carvings of Western Tibetan temples, certainly made by Kashmiriar artists, we perceive that little by little other currents of art and chiefly that of Bengal, introduced into Tibet through Nepal, began to be felt, strongly influencing the Tibetan artisans. In their works the old motifs are not lost but rather blended together and interpreted according to the new sensibility ripened after centuries of close imitation of the Indian models.

<sup>20</sup> Francke: *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, pl. XXXVIIa.

<sup>21</sup> See f.i. Tucci: *Indo-tibetica* III, part II, pl. LXXI.

PLATE X



FIG. 1—THE FIGURE IN THE CENTRE IS PRAJNAPARAMITA



FIG. 2—THE FIGURE IN THE CENTRE IS PRAJNAPARAMITA





FIG. 3—IN THE MIDDLE IS A JAM DPAL ABYANS (ARAPACANA)

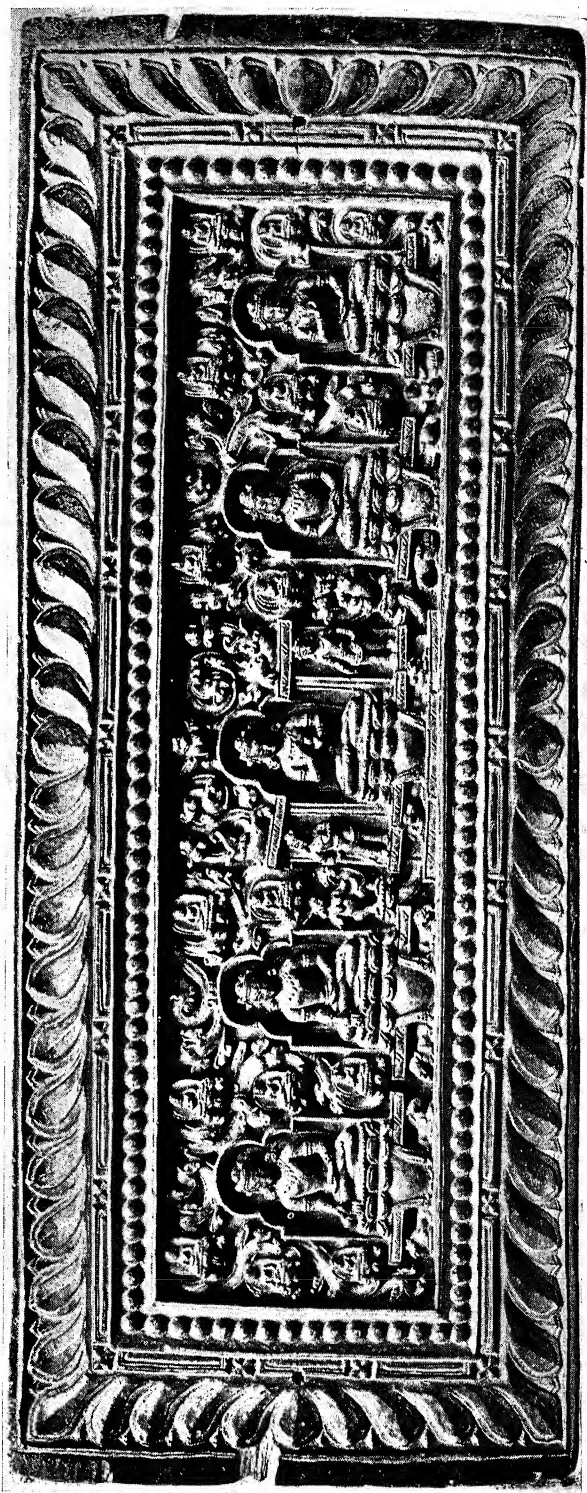


FIG. 4—THE FIVE SUPREME BUDDHAS



FIG. 5—TIBETAN BOOK COVER FROM TOLING



FIG. 6—TIBETAN BOOK COVER—A COMBINATION OF THE ICONOGRAPHIC AND ORNAMENTAL STYLES

PLATE XIII

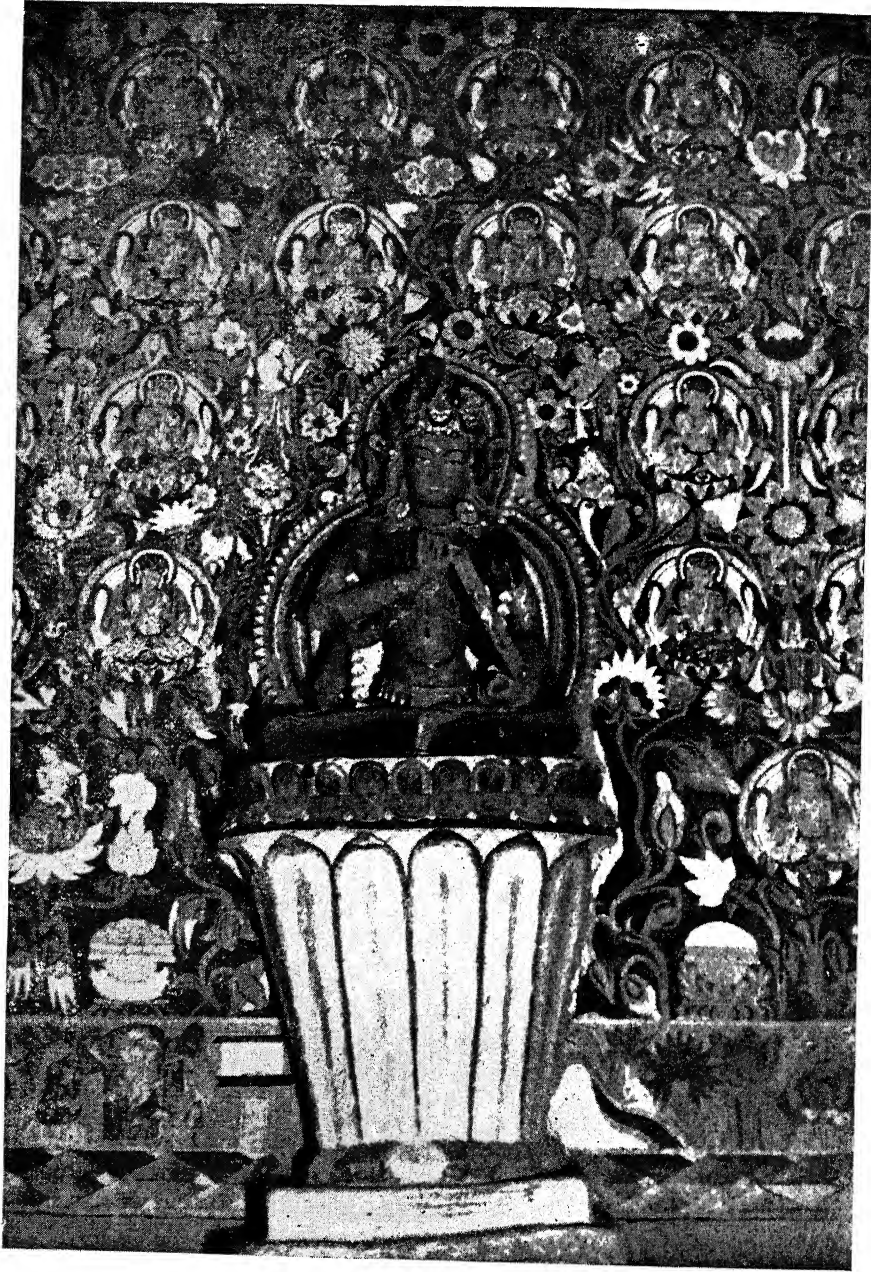


FIG. 7—A TSAPARANG FRESOE PAINTING



## A PAINTING OF A JAIN PILGRIMAGE

BY PROF. W. NORMAN BROWN (U.S.A.)

**P**ILGRIMAGE to holy places is a practice dear to the hearts of Jains, as of other Indians, and such an event is commemorated on a painted textile belonging to the Brooklyn Museum. (Pl. .) This piece has the accession number 31,746, but the Museum's files contain no specific information concerning the date and place of acquisition. The material is plain cotton cloth. Around the edge is a yellow border with a curving vine stem in green and red, and double black guard lines. The painting is in two separate parts, as though the pilgrimage itself was also in two parts. The scene of greater interest can be seen at the top of the textile when it is viewed with the short side placed horizontally. The other scene is at right angles to this and to see it the textile must be turned so that the long side is in the horizontal position. It is possible that the two scenes were painted at different times, but there is no certain evidence to support such an assumption. The textile is torn in several places and the paint rubbed so as to leave the surface bare at some points which are critical for interpretation.

The style of painting, the costumes, and the treatment of facial hair on the male figures indicate that it was executed in Gujarat or some area nearby, such as southern Rajputana, in the late XVIIth or early XVIIIth century, more likely the latter. The drawing is lively and the colours are carefully applied. The palette is simple: red, yellow, blue in two shades, white, silver, light purple, black, dark brown. The iconography is that of the *Śvetāmbara* Jains.

The more important scene depicts continuous action. The story starts at the bottom with a long procession extending from the right-hand edge in an arc across the page to a circle, inside which are seated five Jain Tīrthankaras, one in the centre and one at each corner around him. These are all ornamented and enthroned under architectural units similar to temple *vimānas*, and show the Tīrthankaras as perfected souls (*siddhas*) in *Īṣāṭprāgbhāra* at the top of the universe. The main figure is gold; that at his upper proper right is blue; that at the lower proper right is red; that at the upper proper left is green; and that at the lower proper left is gold. Since none but the green one at the upper proper left can be identified by cognizance, we cannot interpret the grouping. The green figure, however, is marked with a water jar, and therefore represents Malli. The blue figure might be Nemi.

From here the procession reverses itself to reach a cross, which clearly represents a Tīrthankaras' *samavasaraṇa* (place of first preaching) dotted with flowers. Thence it goes, in a not clear sequence, to a tree, set at right angles to the rest of the scene, which has beneath it a Tīrthankara's footprints and marks an initiation scene, to a circle, also dotted with flowers, and finally to a walled city. In the centre of this last is another Tīrthankara, gold and with a lion cognizance and therefore a representation of Mahāvīra. It is a fair assumption that the circle represents the city of Mahāvīra's birth;

the tree, that under which he took initiation (*dīkṣā*) ; the *samavasaraṇa*, that at which he preached his first sermon ; and the city, Pāvā, where he died.

The procession emerges from the city to visit a Jain monk seated under a tree in a preaching attitude. Thence it proceeds to a number of conference places, in which laymen are seated under canopies or in the open air.

Though the procession appears at first sight to be one long train ; a closer inspection shows that this is probably not the case. There is one figure which reappears frequently, generally accompanied by others, who may reasonably be considered to represent the patron of the pilgrimage. He is first seen mounted on a white horse, third figure from the border at the bottom of the painting, with two companions mounted on camels. A little farther on, past the two elephants with empty howdahs with led horses between them, he appears again, this time riding in a handsome four-wheeled carriage drawn by two horses. Just beyond this he is shown a third time, now on foot with several companions, entering the walled place in which are seated the five Tirthankaras. On leaving that enclosure he seems to have been carried in a palanquin. Then he takes to his horse, while riding by his side is a smaller figure, apparently from his position regarded as an equal though less important, perhaps his son. They advance toward the *samavasaraṇa*, on the other side of which the same pair reappears going toward the *samavasaraṇa*, from the opposite direction, or possibly going toward the initiation tree. The leader appears again on his white horse just above the circle, which seems to represent the town of Mahāvīra's birth. Inside the city the leader and his close companion are shown advancing toward the Jina image on foot, their horses behind them riderless, while on the other side of the Jina are various women in attitudes of worship, possibly members of the pilgrimage party. Elsewhere in the city the leader is shown bestowing alms, buying fruit, engaging in conferences. On leaving the city he and his companion visit the monk, and the same pair can be identified several times in the conference scenes at the top of the painting. They also appear in the upper left-hand part of the other painting on the textile.

The fact that the procession is broken into a number of units illustrating the action of the leader is not to be interpreted as meaning that the new persons shown constituted the entire membership of the pilgrimage. It was the custom, and still is, for wealthy Jains to finance large parties of pilgrims, especially to make the ascent of Mount Śatrunjaya, though other places may also be visited. A large pilgrimage led by the celebrated Vastupāla is said to have contained 4,500 carts, 700 palanquins, 700 carriages, 1,800 camels, 2,900 servants, 3,300 bards, 450 Jain singers, 12,100 *Svetāmbaras*, and 1,000 *Digambaras* (H. von Glasenapp, *Der Jainismus*, 1925, p. 440). It seems to have been the intention of this painting to show that the party was large, and this effect is achieved by illustrating various types of animals and vehicles and different sorts of people. But the patron, who gets the maximum of credit, is shown at every important point, and the limitation of space prevents representation of many other individuals.

The other scene on the textile is all mountainous, and certainly represents Mount Sammetaśikhara (Parasnath in Bihar), and possibly Mount Śatrunjaya. It consists chiefly of a number of small peaks, among which are situated the shrines of many Tirthankaras, with some interspersed mango and asoka trees, a doorway, and four piles of eight pots each—this last a symbol of good luck. At the upper left, however, is a circular wall, in which are seated five Tirthankaras. The central figure has a not very clearly indicated cognizance, which might be a bull. The figure is gold in colour, and might therefore represent Rṣabha, and if it does the walled enclosure would be meant for

## A PAINTING OF A JAIN PILGRIMAGE

Śatrunjaya, where R̥ṣabha died. Of the four Tīrthankaras surrounding this figure, the only one identifiable by cognizance is that at the upper proper left. This has an antelope, and would therefore be Śānti.

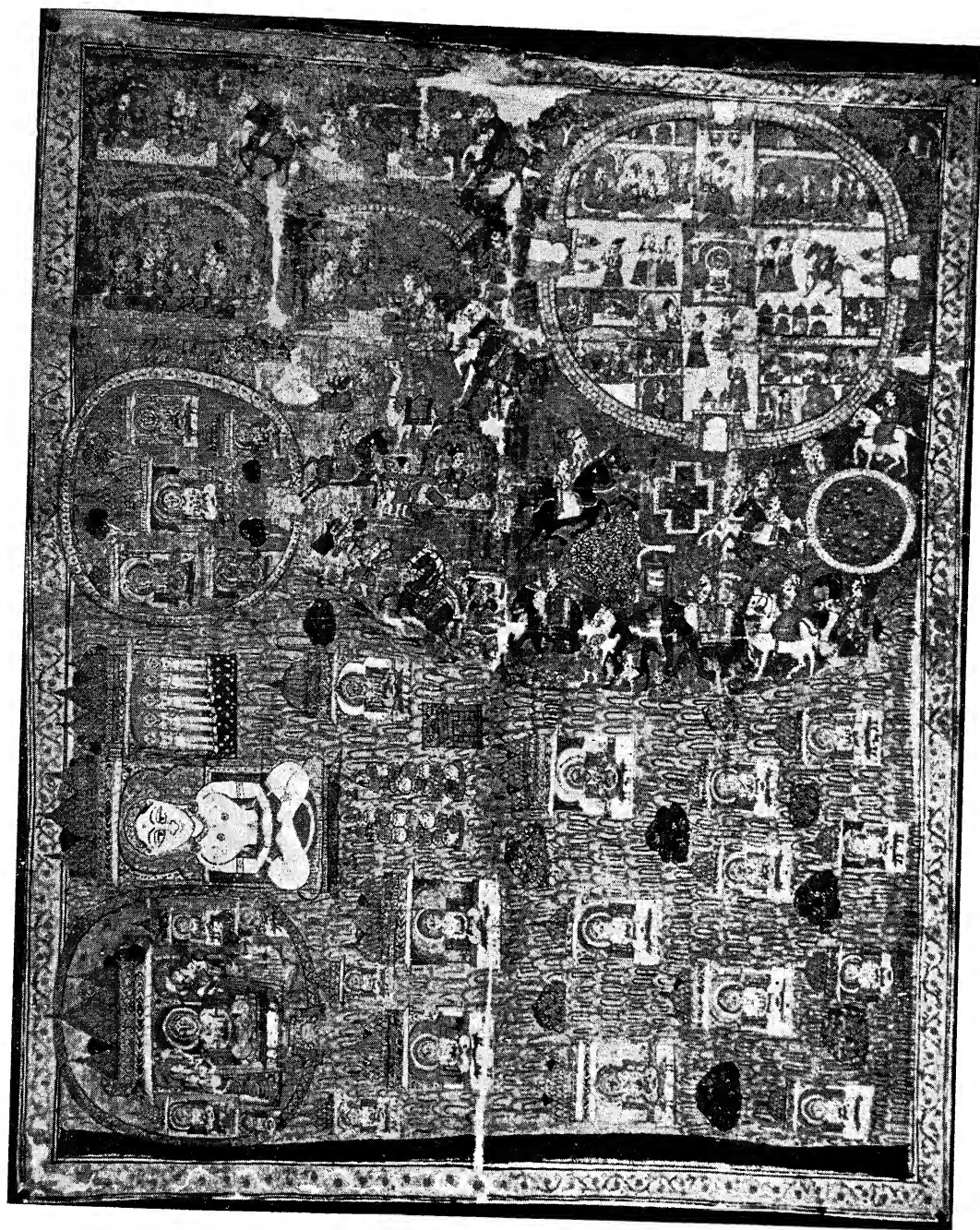
Beside the circular wall is a large white Tīrthankara without cognizance, possibly meant for Candraprabha or Puṣpadanta. Next to him are five more ornamented Tīrthankara figures in white without cognizances, standing in the *kayotsarga* posture. In the rest of the painting are fifteen Tīrthankaras arranged in five rows. Only some of these can be identified. In the first row the first figure from the left may have a goat cognizance, which is that of Kunthu. The second figure in the same row, gold in colour, has an antelope, and is Śānti, who has already appeared above. The third is green, has a serpent as cognizance, and is Pārśva. In the second row the second figure may have a horse cognizance, which is that of Saṃbhava. In the third row the figure at the left is green and has a water jar as cognizance; it therefore represents Malli, who has been shown in the first scene. The second figure in this same row, which is gold, has a strange looking animal below it, which might be meant for a rhinoceros, but if so leaves a good deal to be desired; it could possibly be meant for Śreyāṃsa. The next figure in the same row is red; the cognizance looks like a ram but might be a buffalo, in which case colour and cognizance would be right for Vāsūpūjya. In the fourth row, the third figure is gold, has the *nandīyāvarta* as cognizance, and is therefore Ara. In the bottom row the figure at the left has as cognizance an object looking like a mace, which is not that of any Tīrthankara, but it might be meant for a *vajra* in which case we might have Dharma here. The third figure in the same row is marked with a *svastika* and must be Supārśva. The cognizance of the last figure might be a boar, which belongs to Vimala. Clear but confusing cognizances accompany several other figures. In the fourth row the first figure, which is gold, had a white flower; if it were a blue lotus, the Tīrthankara would be Nami. The second figure in the same row is blue and has a green flower as cognizance; this combination belongs to none of the Tīrthankaras. In the bottom row the middle figure, which is gold, has a flower; this again might possibly be meant for Nami.

The total effect of the painting is not entirely clear. Evidently the patron of the pilgrimage went on a holy journey of considerable length. He seems to have attached the greatest importance to visiting the scenes of the four great events in the life of Mahāvīra—birth, initiation, *saṃavasaraṇa*, *nirvāṇa*. It is possible that he went to Śatrunjaya, since he, his chief companion, and several females are shown worshipping before a figure tentatively identified as that of R̥ṣabha. He may also have gone to Girnar, where Nemi died, if that Tīrthankara's figure is represented among the five inside the circular wall at the upper left-hand corner of the first scene in the painting. The identification is dubious, since it is the central figure that should have the place of honour, and this being gold in colour, cannot properly represent Nemi, who is blue. He certainly went to Sammetaśikhara, where twenty of the Tīrthankaras died. If one of the figures in the second scene represents Vāsūpūjya, as we have already suggested, then the patron also must have gone to Campāpurī, where that Tīrthankara died. In case all these tentative identifications are correct, as well as those which are certain, the patron would have visited the death spots of all the twenty-four Tīrthankaras, a truly extensive pilgrimage in days where there were no railroads.

The number of Tīrthankara representations is thirty-two. Since there are only twenty-four Tīrthankaras, there is an excess of eight. However, there are two certain duplications (Śānti and Malli); if all cognizances were clear, we should be able to find

others. It is possible that some of the confusion or inaccuracy may be the result of using a non-Jain artist. It is no uncommon phenomenon to find errors in Jain manuscript illustrations that would hardly have been possible if the illustrator had been a well-informed member of the faith. To the patron of the textile some inaccuracy would perhaps not have seemed a very serious fault. He might have wished only to have a pictorial memento of his pious tīrthayātra (pilgrimage), and this purpose the textile certainly fulfilled.

PLATE XIV



*Courtesy, Brooklyn Museum.*

INDIAN PAINTED COTTON TEXTILE—XVIII CENTURY.



THE TROUBLED IMAGE  
AN ESSAY UPON MUGHAL PAINTING

BY ERIC SCHROEDER (U.S.A.)

LIVES fruitful for good in other lives, as Ananda Coomaraswamy's life has been fruitful, are often dedicated to the affirmation of generally neglected values. By emphasising what is antithetical to the ephemerally prevalent they may be said to correct their times, and in a certain sense to throw the shadow of eternity into their own day. For many Westerners, struck by the now unmistakable failure of our civilization to make mankind happy, Dr. Coomaraswamy's has been the prophetic gesture pointing East, and his the authoritative and mordant voice affirming the existence of a Tradition, of a pattern of order more important to our well-being to-day than any scientific discovery or any international authority could possibly be. And India, from whose art and thought he has drawn so many texts, has become to such Westerners a kind of Holy Land, to every station of whose historical pilgrimage a special and spiritual interest attaches.

It is therefore in imitation and in gratitude that I take up the question of Mughal painting.

Mughal painting<sup>1</sup> is to-day somewhat depreciated, not only by certain Western critics, who might be incompetent, but by many Indian writers, who generally speak of it without the patriotic enthusiasm and love which they lavish upon Ajānta or Rājput painting and upon Indian sculpture of almost all periods.

The Indian critic, as speaking from an Indian mind, speaks with authority upon these matters, and his testimony cannot lightly be set aside. And what is implicit in his judgments of XVIIth century Indian art is that Mughal painting is somehow external to the main trend of Indian culture, that it is an island in the stream, that it did not express the eternal and essential India, but something else.

And yet it is Indian, painted in India by Indians and by a few Persians who once in India could not help but succumb to Indian influences. We therefore wonder what is the essential India which is supposed to predominate at Ajānta and in Rājput painting but which, though it must be present, is so qualified in Mughal art that it is as it were disowned. The question is a large one. But perhaps we think of India as the characteristically religious country, as the home of the oldest still current metaphysical discipline, and think of the persistent essential India of history as the most saturated with religion of the great cultures.

Man as creator, in Coellen's apparently skeptical phrase, re-presents the objective

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world as his own product, religion and art both being such results of his creative activity. Like religion, art puts existence as we perceive it into relation with its origin, exhibiting determinate forms given or suggested by the material universe under the light or apprehension of their indeterminate Cause. No art, therefore, of any period, is exempt from relationship with religion or metaphysics, and even the most naturalistic art projects some particular artist's sense of the Universal Ground of all being. Meissonier and Gérôme, for example, painted as they did paint because their deepest thought, translated into metaphysics, would have been philosophic naturalism. So we need not hesitate to seek in the long consistency of the plastic forms of Indian art and the long consistency of Hinduism one underlying apprehension of the nature of the indeterminate Cause of the forms we perceive. As to the character of that apprehension, it is natural to apply first to those who, claiming knowledge of the Cause, have tried to put their knowledge into words.

Nowadays we hear a good deal about the essential identity of Eastern and Western mysticism, and much of what contemporary exponents of the Perennial Philosophy tell us in that regard is surely true. But for all that, and recognizing the many texts which may be cited against me, I am aware of a certain difference between the two apprehensions. The images in which Western mystics try to record their experience of God are predominantly images of a Light illuminating the soul, of Something which visits, embraces, surrounds, and even at times can desert the soul. Mysticism, says Fichte, is "far-sight"; God surrounds man, says Eckhardt, "as my cowl surrounds myself." But the Cause, the Self, the original One, it need hardly be said in the present publication, is most typically represented by Hinduism as having entered elementary bodies to quicken and fill them, the outer individuality being subject to its own inner self, which inner self is the original Self. Roughly, simply, and too emphatically, we may say that for the West the indeterminate Cause of determinate forms surrounds, and for India It lies within. It is "that Interior Person of all beings."

At this level we may try to recover the relation between the Image in the spirit under presidency of which the artist works and the created material image which he bequeathes. Actually the spiritual image is partly derived from the outer world perceived, however much such derivation is modified by intellectual factors. And a comparison of the artist's work with objective nature may help us ourselves to envisage the image in the spirit of the dead maker; not that it is the function of art to imitate natural appearance, but because all well-made and meaningful works of painting and sculpture do in point of fact embody the appearances of objective nature more or less transformed.

We may consider first three figures of Yakshis from Mathura (fig. 1). There is little need to expatiate on the obvious quality of these sculptures, their genial proclamation that "whatever lives is full of the Lord." Our feeling that life swells these exuberant forms from within is immediate. But this is by no means all. If we look more closely we are confronted with the most interesting departures from anatomical accuracy; and *all these departures are in one direction*. First, the sculptor selects for emphasis certain elements of the figure in themselves full and convex. Next, in figures so very feminine it is curious that the artist has apparently not the slightest feeling for the beautiful brooding form of the shoulder and trapezius muscle which is so characteristic of women. We observe the inaccurate placing of the nipples, and the lack of any effect of gravitation on the flesh.

And the waist—instead of the subtle undulations which a Greek or Renaissance sculptor would have given us, we have a plastic non-entity, on which the massive volumes of the chest and abdomen impinge. But most extraordinary of all is the form of the leg. Not only is there an absence of any modelling on the inner side of the thigh, any indication of that long graceful concavity between the extensor muscles on the front of the thigh and the adductors within which gives form to that part of the body, but below the knee the long, wide, and deep hollow between knee and calf, a concavity which is in nature almost half as long as the entire stretch from knee to ankle, is absolutely suppressed.

We are forbidden to explain these peculiarities as incompetence of eye or hand. The men who could model the convex outer surface of the thigh with such truth and eloquence that we can read the whole stance and character of the figure concentrated in that one marvellous form were not the men to miss one of the largest and most expressive shapes in the whole anatomy. No, these peculiarities, striking as they are, are far too consistent to be explained by want of capacity. Rather they seem to result from a feeling that convex volume is expressive, or "truthful," and that concave form is comparatively irrelevant. They are the direct plastic embodiment of a spiritual image—metaphysical in emphasis. Their idiom speaks of a Cause hidden within the body, "within the heart as the fire is hidden within the firewood."

The Image in the spirit informed by an interior Cause could only be cast into a plastic image composed as far as possible of swelling surfaces, volumes expressive of interior power, while those parts of the natural body where external power—atmospheric pressure and gravitation—take advantage of the intermittent musculature to create hollows, those parts are not rendered. For the artist they are not true to the ultimate Reality which gives form to all things; and therefore his meditation eliminates them.

A thousand years later, the same apprehension of reality underlies the famous South Indian bronze (fig. 2) of a Śaiva boy-saint, in some ways far more subtly. The smooth unhollowed cheek, the transformation of the eye-socket, bringing the eye into the same plane as the brow and practically eliminating the whole concavity, the almost complete stylization of the legs which substitutes a conical form for the natural shape which could never be rendered in detail without exploiting its concavities: all these are representations of the same Image.

But it is more delicately embodied. Although the torso is composed exclusively of intersecting volumes, the intersections are so smoothed that even if we identify the rounded cylindrical surface which runs up the front of the body as a "falsification" of the divided flattish mass which lies on the natural body, even so the most pedantic eye could hardly be offended. The body of the statue is convincing; almost it persuades us that a human body could be like that.

The greatest arts are generally thus persuasive. Unnatural, "impossible" as they are, something in us affirms that somewhere, sometime, the Mother of God in the apse of S. Sophia and Greco's Saint Andrew have been, are, or shall be. Such creations are creatures transfigured, not de-natured.

But the transformation of nature is very various. For a moment we may consider how European art, in the fulness of its expressive power, treats a subject not unlike that of the Mathura sculptures (fig. 3). For all the bulk and opulence of the form, for all the conscious opposition of its unified mass to the shadows behind, there is no mistaking the quality of Bernini's image. The muscles of the neck, the breasts, the flank and abdomen,

the groin, all confess their function ; it is to draw shadow across even a form whose broad illumination is the verbal content of the design—the Discovery of Truth by Time. It is in the hollows under the shoulder and at the waist that the anatomy becomes most tender. And in the drapery, where creative will was free, we realize that the whole was designed primarily in shadows, and cut to yield a poetry of darkness. The flow and radiation of the shadows is more vividly felt than the disposition of the lights. Perhaps the difference between this and the Mathura sculptures can be summarily understood by imagining drawings upon tinted paper. An expressive drawing of Bernini's work could be made with black chalk alone ; an expressive drawing of the Indian figures could be made with white alone. Bernini's figure is anatomically very rich. But the anatomy is much more arbitrary than it is easy for Westerners to realize. For instance, in the foot which rests upon the globe, the shadows of the ankle and sole-edge are very beautiful in their rhythmic relationship with the little drapery below, but they are not anatomically correct. The painting of Rembrandt or Greco declares even more unmistakably the reality of irresistible exterior power, calling form out of darkness and re-subjecting it to darkness. The lights, feverish and brief or broad and qualified, the urgent shadows, creation and destruction enveloping the form and working upon it from without, how absolutely they are expressed in a language of hollows, as if only concave form was "truthful."

Painting and sculpture, of course, are two very different techniques. But both own always a common master, the spirit itself. What is generally termed classical Indian painting is known in the murals of the Ajānta caves. Such a painting as the Riding of the Boddhisatva is too well-known to need reproduction ; but it is significant that the same principles of composition : the organization of the whole in compartments, the grouping of figures which fill these compartments with the unity of a curious introspective attention, the all-pervading lateral and diagonal rhythms which pass like waves from compartment to compartment over the whole painting, and, we are made to feel, beyond it—all these pictorial methods reappear in a Mughal manuscript-illumination painted a thousand years later, in which we see Humayun watching some dancing women (reproduced by F. R. Martin, *Miniature Painting* . . . , Vol. II, pl. 183). It is the more interesting to see the same world come to life again because of this complete form no intermediate mural or illumination which has survived gives promise.

But since I do not think that analysis of pictorial composition can help us to see the true character of Mughal painting so well as an understanding of the painter's relation to the natural world which supplies his art with forms for the embodiment of his ideas, we turn to a single painted figure from Ajānta.

To us the linear beauty of such a figure as the offerer of the lotus (fig. 4) is so bewitching that we notice only secondarily its plastic character. And yet its technique, the careful building of the form in gradated tones, is, within the outline, distinctly plastic. The protuberance of the brow, the prominences around the eye-socket, the pressure of the eyeball through the heavy lid, and even the climbing of the long elevator muscle of the cheek, all these are so classically felt and so well rendered that we do not notice how comparatively inexpressive is the anatomy of the upper arm, for instance, its two concavities of contour being eliminated.

In the painting of the striped garment about the hips we must consider something other than the plastic technique : the two-dimensional nature of painting. The Ajānta artist dealing with this striped cloth summarizes it, with a simplicity which in

comparison with his labours on the modelling of the body seems at first sight to be indifferent to the bulk beneath. But although the garment looks comparatively flat (and calculatedly so), the painter has given rotundity to the form of the hip by curving the stripes upward at the edge. Curiously enough, however, the middle stripes, unlike those above and below them, run almost uncurved as far as the outline. Now these middle stripes run out to the point of the trochanter, the bulkiest part of the body; and we see, lurking within the classic moderation of the drawing, a principle or feeling that volume can be rendered on the flat surface by lateral thrust, by expansion. And the relation between Indian sculpture and Indian painting can be summarily grasped in this figure: the same feeling for volume informed from within results in a sculpture of convex surfaces and in a painting of sidewise movement and expansion. What swells the sculpture distends the silhouette, or "displaces" its parts (such displacement of course is in no sense erroneous, but a purposeful expressive means). Hence in this figure the rendering of a self-contained intensity of gesture, the expression of devotion, by a contraposto far more extreme than could readily be found in contemporary sculpture; this is the *graphic* language, to us almost violent in so masterly a work, of the essential introspective India.

At the time when Akbar created the Mughal Empire in the latter XVIth century, painting in more than one style was being produced in Central and Western India. Dr. Kramrisch and Professor Norman Brown have published interesting examples of the mural and miniature art of the preceding age, and indicated the variety of traditions represented. But one condition is common to Deccani painting, Jain painting, and the strongly coloured and crude style which has been called early Rājput, alike. In all the predominance of the decorative over the significant is complete. Nothing could be more admirable as ornamental pattern than Jain painting; no colour could be richer nor harmony of scale more confident and absolute than that of the best early Ragmala paintings. But formal imagination (*sādrśya*) is to seek. King, minister and dancer have the same face, the same quality of gesture. An ascetic, a musical, or a pastoral scene are distinguished by iconographic accessory only, not by mood or flavour (*rasa*). Serenity of repetition, unembarrassed decorativeness of formula, these are marks of folk-painting; and of Indian painting when Akbar ascended the throne.

Such work could never satisfy a cultivated Timurid prince. Nor can we say that his instinct was unsound. In Jain painting, for example, the old compartment-composition has reached a rigid and inorganic end-state. And that two-dimensional transmutation of the feeling for volume which we have called lateral expansion has also reached a dead end here: there are (fig. 5) too many unthinking approximations to circular curves. Skilful as it is, XVIth century Jain painting is perfunctory as well as monotonous; unintended intersections of line, for example, are the unmistakable result of carelessness. The thing was not worth making well even to the man who made it. But in an artist carelessness is sin. Such an art may be truly called degenerate: it is fallen from its own proper high estate. Its formulae are deployed without love. And it is not only far from nature: it is, I hazard, far from God.

We recall Coellen's proposition that man as creator re-presents the objective world as his own product. But art "imitates Nature (*Natura naturans*, God) in her mode of working." The re-presentation of the objective world which art is will therefore ideally partake of the nature of the original and eternal Creation, and the most noble arts will re-enact that Creation in the most Godlike or "natural" manner.

Creative nature, of course, exemplifies infinite order ; and we applaud the scholastic definition of beauty as " the sheen of order." According to an admirable modern working definition, the aesthetic value of works of art depends on the quantity and perfection of emotionally appreciable order in them.

Now, though order is infinite in nature, variety is only less than infinite ; and I suggest that art most highly imitates nature's mode of working when the artist embodies in his work as much variety as can still be felt to be entirely instinct with order. If this suggestion is any novelty, it is perhaps because the great men to whom we owe the clearest thinking on these questions have themselves been preoccupied with the reduction of art's variety to order. Cosmic creation works otherwise, reducing unity, which is order absolute, to variety. *He wanted every form for He wanted to show Himself.* And it was the law of creative variety which condemned old Indian painting in its XVIth century form to a most drastic change—almost to extinction.

For the very India which had uttered it now felt that this art was no longer a representation of reality but a travesty of it. No sooner had Rajasthan and Gujarat seen Mughal painting than these hallowed formulae fell into absolute disuse ; and the ancient concepts only re-emerge after an assimilation of certain elements of Mughal technique. It is a remarkable moment in history : the orderly simplicity of the spiritual Image was suddenly troubled by some gust of neglected Reality. The sight of imported Persian or European paintings was not the inner cause of the change ; it merely helped it. We know that Akbar took Persians, Uzbeks, Qalmaqs, Arabs, and Hindus into his academy at Fathpur Sikri. He noticed, we are told, that the Hindus were the most promising. Abu'l-Fazl's enigmatic phrase : " the Hindus did not paint their subjects on the page of the imagination " ought surely to be taken in its simplest meaning : the Hindus were truer to objective fact than their colleagues. And it was as variety of *fact* that variety, that essential motive in creation, re-entered the Indian spirit.

It has sometimes been assumed that because Mughal painting was an art of comparative or apparent naturalism it was spiritually superficial, preoccupied with matters which Indian art was normally too metaphysical to care about. But there is " a time to every purpose under the heaven," and it is the precise value of history as a spiritual discipline that it offers the opportunity for selfless contemplation of various manifestation in time. *Non semper tendit arcem Apollo.* If India in Akbar's time appears to us less Indian than usual, then we are invited to correct our notion of India.

Historians have noted the abrupt surcease of new sectarian formations in the XVIth century. Analogy should warn us against interpreting the change as a symptom of spiritual degeneracy ; in the United States, for example, extreme richness of sectarian crystallization has coincided with a comprehensive, dynamic, and sincere materialism.

Fortunately, there is extant a remarkable description of religious India in Mughal times—Mohsan Fani's *Dabistan*. Although that book describes many dogmas which are more fully known to us in more ancient sources, its description of the XVIIth century exposition of those dogmas is first-hand ; and we may say that the work enables us to *know* the religious life of the times, as it appeared to a much-travelled observer whose own sympathy with the philosophic cast of Hinduism at its best was profound. It seems symbolic that Mohsan, himself a Sufi, was also " godson " to the great Hindu saint Chadrup. Along with the variety of religious formulation which the author remarks as characteristic of Hinduism, he allows us to make out an element of exchange, of amalgamation as well as argument, a mutual curiosity among the sects, and in certain cases an

evident disbelief in the exclusiveness of creeds. "The tribes of mankind, high and low, with the existing diversity of creeds and difference of customs, which are all under the trust of a beneficent Lord, ought to dwell in the shade of the protection of a just king, and persevere in the performance of their own worship, and the exigencies of their devotion" is Mohsan's interpretation of the Code of Akbar two generations after its promulgation. The Hindu saint Pertabmal "is not confined to any faith, he knows that every faith is a road that leads to God." And a Brahmin, questioned because he was eating and drinking with Musulmans, answers "God forbid you should be (mere) Musulmans." Of the characteristic Vaishnavism of the age he observes: "Whoever, Hindu, Musulman, or other, wishes is received into their (Viraga) religion; none are rejected. On the contrary, all are invited." In spite of Brahmin exclusiveness, and of sectarian brawling on the vulgar level, we have an impression of mingling and discussion, of comparison and fusion of truths, of the charitable tolerance of variety, of an organic and general religiousness. It is the spirit of *love* which the book enables us to discern moving in Indian life of the XVIIth century. Vaishnavism was then widely diffused and fervent; and "by Viśnu is meant God's attribute of divine love, as well as the universal soul."

"Show love to all creatures and thou shalt have bliss, for when thou lovest all things thou lovest the Lord, for He is All in all" was the *bhakti* of Tulsi Das, one of the master spirits of that age. It is the discipline of the Mahayana as distinct from that of the Hinayana. Such testimony should be the more precious in India for being exceptional. In Śrī Aurobindo's words, "It may be said that the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fullness—to its heights we can always reach—when we keep our feet firmly on the physical. *Earth is His footstool*, says the Upanishad." And as Aldous Huxley, commenting upon this passage, writes, "to discover the Kingdom of God exclusively within oneself is easier than to discover it, not only there, but also in the outer world of minds and things and living creatures." He adds this pertinent criticism from the *Lankavatara Sutra*: "the Śravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas fail to realize that the visible world is nothing but the Mind; they are still in the realm of individuation. . . . The Boddhisatvas know that the visible world is nothing but a manifestation of Mind itself."

Such knowledge, and such knowledge alone, can explain the infinite variety of carefulness which we see in the best early Mughal art. The masterpieces of portraiture, the unequalled representations of the animal world, could never be made, as any painter knows, except in self-forgetting love. And we shall probably be wise as well as charitable to believe that such spirituality goes beyond pantheism, when India is its theatre. It was surely for India that Akbar spoke when he said: "It always seems to me that a painter has very special means of recognizing God, for when he draws a living thing, and contemplates the thing in detail, he is driven to thinking of God, Who creates the life which he cannot give *his* work, and learns to understand God better." It is not necessary to press this point: the power of Mughal portraiture is only too well recognized, although it has been ill explained as the fruit of a wholly secular mentality. We should remember that it was in no secular but in the most solemnly religious and transcendental spirit that Milton longed in his blindness for the sight of

Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine.

Devout vision of the world of divine extension produces an art far other than the art



of ages dominated by theology ; but that the art of the great Mughal portraitists and animal painters, like the art of Rembrandt, is not " religious " is a conclusion based on slight experience of the actual practice of painting.

Such work is intensely sacrificial ; no mode requires a completer degree of devotedness, a more intense emptying of self in the work, a more " mortified " attention to reality. That reality is God unformulated, wholly free of theological canon. But the actual relation of theology to spirituality is historically various. " Who beholds Me formulates it not," says one of the greatest Muslim saints ; " and whoso formulates Me beholds Me not. A man who beholds and then formulates is veiled from Me by the formulation." This is perhaps the original sin of theology ; but there have been others. Theologians have often succeeded in subjecting painters to their own (sometimes ambitious) ends ; but " any meddling of one class with another " as Plato says, " may be most justly termed evil-doing." By and large, it is the serious painter who knows what and how he should paint *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, not the theologian. The hostility of the theologians to Michelangelo's " Last Judgment " is a case very much in point ; but at least the Pope, touched by a grace to which the canonists were apparently impermeable, was of the painter's party when at the unveiling he broke spontaneously into prayer : " Lord, charge me not with my sins when thou shalt come on the Day of Judgment."

That Asiatic art has in many ages been more docile to theology than was Mughal art, and that it has generally proceeded in a more narrowly intellectualizing mode, is very generally known. Dr. Coomaraswamy has demonstrated the existence of an Asiatic *Summa Theologica* in which the theory of that mode is subsumed under a dogmatic Tradition envisaging the totality of social and spiritual life. The importance of *pramāṇa* " the norm of properly conceived design," to such painting or sculpture is paramount. But Dr. Coomaraswamy has also indicated the existence of an art " typically developed throughout Asia in the second millennium" in which " no distinction is felt between what a thing ' is ' and what it ' signifies. ' " It is to this broad category that Mughal painting constitutes India's chief contribution, for India's " vision of the Abstract-Universal " as Mr. Okakura calls it remained as a preoccupation during the centuries when the Far East was producing the art of Sung. Iconoclastic unitarianism in the Muslim states may not have done more to impoverish artistic procedures than the overpowering effect of a complete stylization and a vast canonical corpus in the Hindu states. Neither painting nor sculpture can live at their best except in fairly direct communion with the visual world, either in the ardent incorporation of natural beauty and variety or, when such assimilation has been accomplished by a great tradition, in the interval devoted to the *perfecting* of a style. The subsequent *perpetuation* of it can only lead to senescence. Habit, as Scott said, is a form of death.

Happily, no senescence is ever final. At rhythmic intervals the human spirit reaches out again in love to this goodly frame the earth, this brave o'erhanging firmament, and man, the beauty of the world. Dr. Coomaraswamy has called attention to a wonderful passage in the Mahabharata : " When the body-dweller, controlling the powers of the soul that seize upon what is their own in sounds and the rest, *glows*, then he sees the Spirit (*ātman*) extended in the world, and the world in the Spirit." It would be hard to find a more accurate description than this of those moments in history when Beauty seems to be absolute as a determinant ; for only so can we explain Greek art of the early Vth century B.C., and Persian or European art of the early XVth century.

PLATE XV

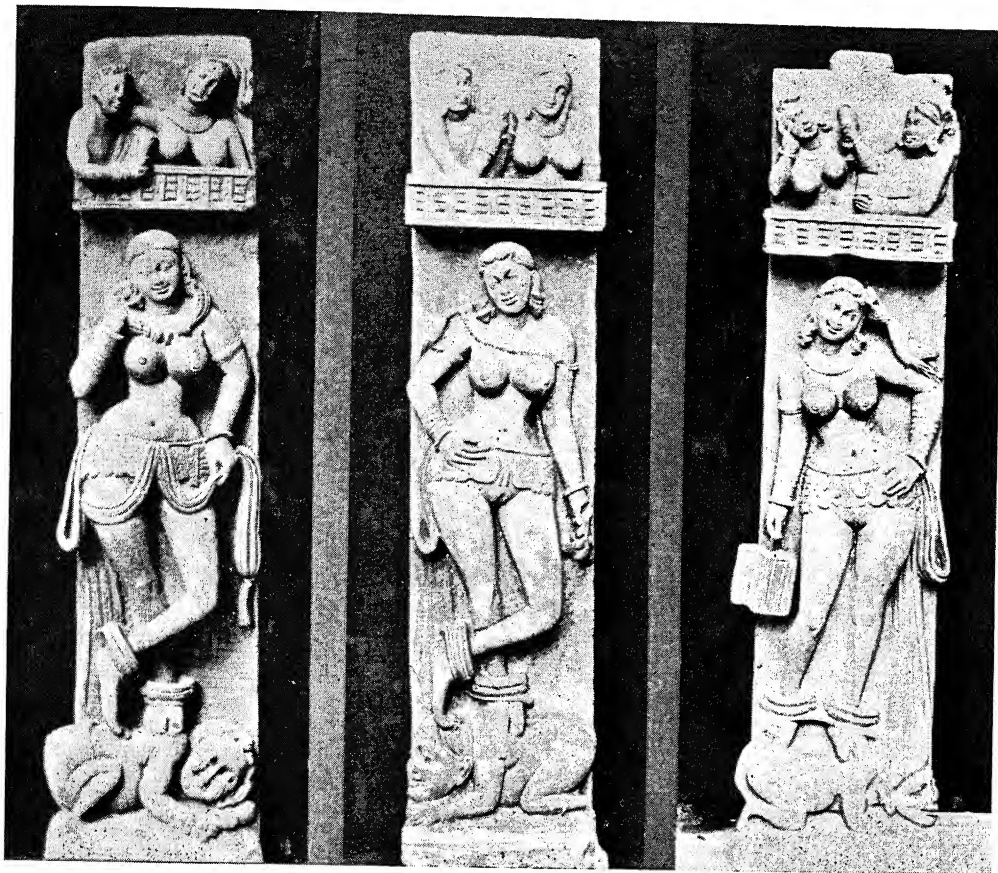


FIG. I--YAKSHIS, FROM MATHURA



FIG. 3—LOTUS-OFFERER. AJANTA

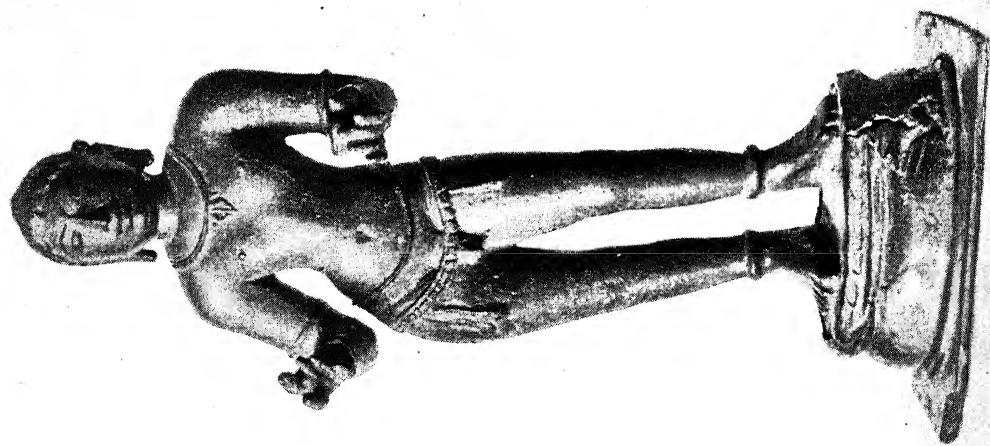


FIG. 2—TIRU JNANA SAMBANDHA SWAMI  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). South India.  
Ca XIV Century

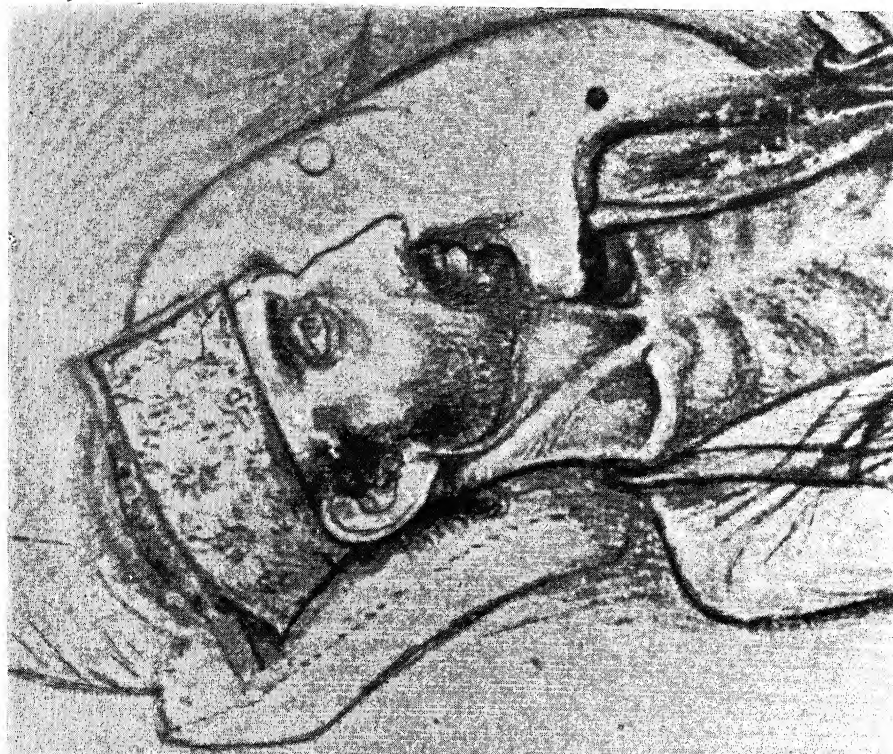


FIG. 5—DEATH OF INAYAT KHAN. DETAIL, GREATLY ENLARGED.  
MUGHAL, 1628 A.D.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



FIG. 4—KALPA SUTRA, Miniatur (Jain)  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston





FIG. 8.—AKBAR AND CHADRU (DETAIL),  
MUGHAL, EARLY XVIIITH CENTURY  
Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Mass.



FIG. 6.—WOMAN WITH FRUITING TREES.  
MUGHAL, XVIIITH CENTURY.  
Author's Collection, Cambridge, Mass.



FIG. 7—KALI-DURGA VISITS THE PAN DAVA CAMP  
Miniature from a Razmnama MS. Mughal, Ca 1580-1590  
Author's Collection, Cambridge, Mass.





FIG. 9—A NOCTURNAL GATHERING OF ASCETICS. MUGHAL, LATE XVIII<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
Collection : Mrs. Eric Schroeder, Cambridge, Mass.

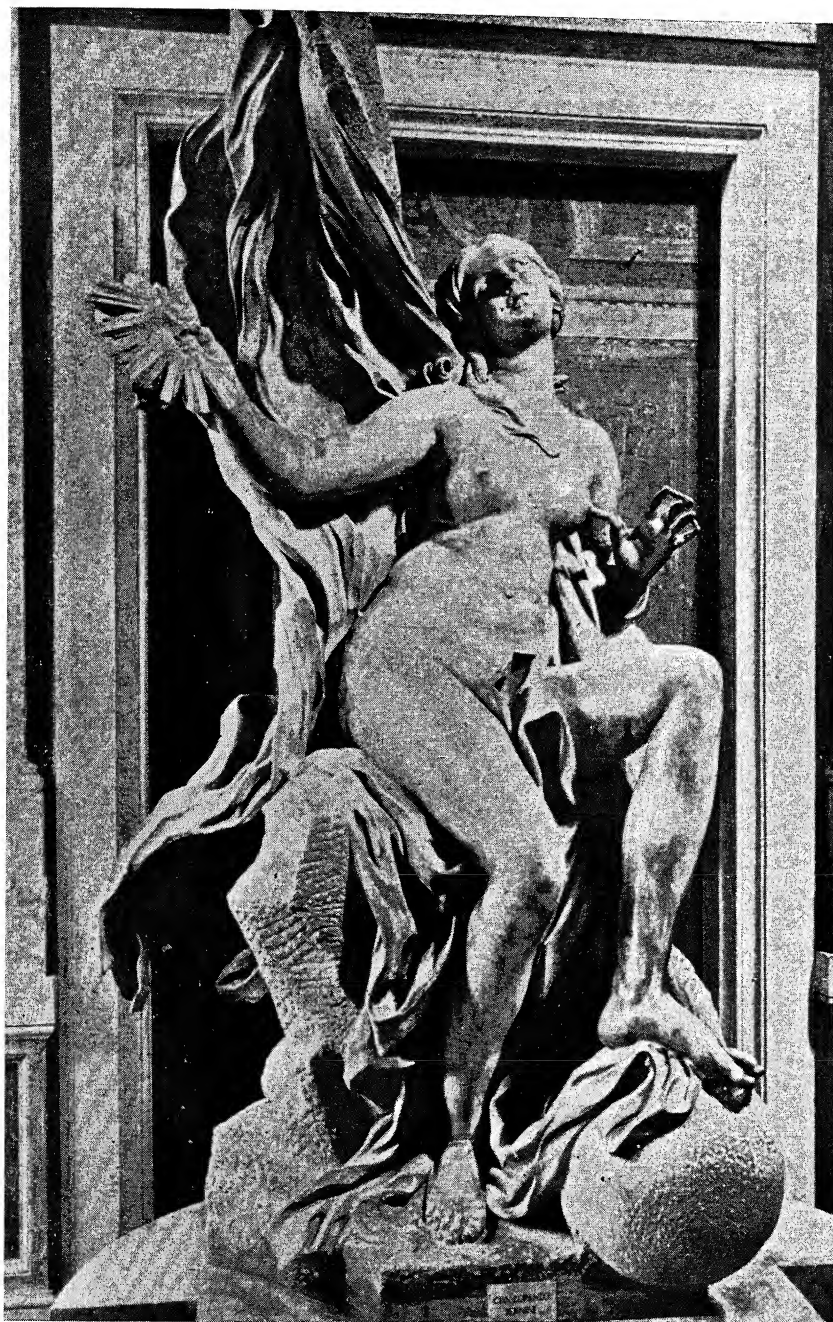


FIG. 10—"TROUBLED IMAGE-SCHOREDER"

STATUE OF TRUTH DISCOVERED BY TIME (ROME) BY BERNINI

## THE TROUBLED IMAGE

These so-called "classical" periods appear to find issue in dark historical processes which may perhaps be as well understood by reference to the Primal Myth as by any other means. To the blissful vision of the utter extension of God succeeds a moment of horror: the utter *division* is apparent. There is little use, I believe, in searching political or economic history for the causes of that strange spasm which troubled so many cultures in the late XVIth century. We can only say that something then seemed to shake men's minds. In Italy appeared Caravaggio, not, as he is so often called, a "realist"—God save the mark!—but the first Western painter of human loneliness, of the concrete, blemished, desperate soul in the blackness of its isolation: in England the Tragedy of Blood and the Shakespearean Wheel of Fire; in Persia, for the first and only time so far as extant paintings testify, the representation of evil.

Now in India the classical or beauty-dominated period is not so easily defined. For the southern Hindu states the reign of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar may serve as focus. But it seems as if the classical period had been "postponed" in central and northern India, so that the celebration of worldly beauty which had to be was carried over into the darker age of tragic individuation which runs from Akbar's time to Shah Jahan's, precisely contemporary with the corresponding age, from Titian to Rembrandt in painting, in Europe. For the similar troubling of the cultural image in India is unmistakable, there is a sudden and partial tincture of materialism in the normal theism of the land, expressed externally in certain aspects of Mughal imperialism and artistically in the acute hunger for fact as such of the Indian painters who went to work for the Emperors.

In such a drawing as the "Death of Inayat Khan" (fig. 6) the unreserved and unshrinking pity, the fearless love even of most terrible fact with which it was painted, seem almost superhuman, like the compassion of Rembrandt's "Slaughter-House" in the Glasgow Art Gallery. These triumphs of pity over horror are among the greatest human achievements; if Bodhisattvas were painters, so might they paint.

Portraiture (the revelation of divine order in the face as character and destiny have left it) and drama (the reconstruction of order in the variety of individualised wills), such are the most characteristic activities of the soul looking homeward toward God in these periods. In the literature of India, its great monument is the so-called Rāmāyana of Tulsi Das, whose "phrases have passed into the common speech and are used by everyone (even in Urdu) without consciousness of their origin" as his translator writes, "and whose doctrine actually forms the most powerful religious influence in present-day Hinduism. . . . No one can read it (the Rāmāyana) in the original without being impressed by it as the work of a great genius. Its style varies with each subject. There is the deep pathos of the scene in which is described Rama's farewell to his mother; the rugged language depicting the horrors of the battlefield—a torrent of harsh sounds dashing against each other and reverberating from phrase to phrase; and, as occasion requires, a sententious aphoristic method of narrative teeming with similes drawn from nature herself, and not from the traditions of the schools. His characters, too, live and move with all the dignity of an heroic age. Each is a real being with a well defined personality . . . as lifelike and distinct as any in occidental literature."

This, and precisely, is the spirit of Mughal painting; and it fulfils with curious exactness an older Indian ideal. Very interesting texts translated by Mr. Raghavan from the Nārada Silpa Śāstra lay it down that the proper function of picture-galleries shall be to give joy to the eye, their use being proper to the relaxation of the afternoon. The proper

subjects for such galleries are depictions of "Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and others; in some places great sages; in other places great kings hunting and doing similar things; and forms of brave warriors in action with weapons, showing their strength, and taming wild beasts, etc. . . . depiction of theatrical entertainers, of fighters, of various subjects and of various animals . . . elsewhere horse-pictures, elephants, winged elephants, elephants with mahuts, or hobbled, or playing, or snared, or lying down." The king himself should paint "paintings human and divine (in theme), paintings of birds and wonderful forms of varied nature, rivers, mountains; all these various kinds according to his inventive skill and methodically."

The ancient list reads like a summarized iconography of Mughal manuscript and album painting. It suggests an encyclopedic art; and although it is of course in its specification of Devas and so forth Hindu in character (historically it could hardly be otherwise), it indicates an old Indian concept of art's function absolutely different from that of the theologians who went so far as to say that "images of the angels are productive of good, and heavenward-leading, but those of men or other mortal beings lead not to heaven nor work weal" (Śukranītisāra). Since Mughal painting is not definitely Hindu, it may be worth while to consider one or two Mughal works embodying ideas markedly Hindu or old Indian.

No clearer example could be found than an album-painting done in the middle XVIIth century, mounted on a leaf the verso of which bears a calligraphic exercise by Khwaja Muhammad Futuh (fig. 7). The female figure with arms raised over her head is simply the same girl associated with fruiting trees which has appeared upon innumerable Buddhist and Hindu shrines, the iconography of which is well known from the writings of Dr. Coomaraswamy, the late Dr. Cohn-Wiener, and others. She is a "Yakshi." Here in a Mughal album the eternal India finds characteristic utterance; this drawing is perhaps closer to the sculpture of Mathura and Konarak than anything in Rājput painting. It is particularly interesting as evidence of the rapidity with which, after no more than two or three generations, painters of middle Mughal times had relapsed into the Indian norm of vision. The hands are already highly stylized and the anatomy in general is that of the Mathura Yakshis which we began by considering. The hips are rounded with a line which exemplifies what we termed "lateral expansion" at its most uninhibited. The contrast with works of great intellectual tension such as the "Death of Inayat Khan" or the marvellous drawing of an elephant in the Boston Museum is very marked, for in those somewhat earlier masterpieces the Indian normal predisposition to render form in convex shapes is almost entirely suspended; the concept follows devoutly and strenuously upon the real natural form.

An illustration (fig. 8) for the Razmnama (the Persian version of the Mahabharata made for Akbar, copies of which his nobles were urged to have made) represents the Devi, Kali in terrible form, visiting the camp of the Pandavas, tearing their flesh and drinking their blood. Nothing could be more complete than the incorporation here of meaning in form, the "correspondence of mental and sensational factors in the work" as Dr. Coomaraswamy has translated *sādrśya*, that "essential to the very substance of painting" (Viśnudharmottara). The dreadful figure which dominates the scene by its size and the energy of its gesture and expression, or "flavour" (*rasa*), is painted in the blue-black of the goddess's iconographic norm. But so much darker and colder is the hue than those of the landscape or the dead bodies, that as the eye travels among the gruesome details of the slaughter it is only aware of something indeterminate and disturbing



in the place where Kali stands. The devi can be clearly made out only when she is directly examined: well-distributed strong yellows in costumes and harness prevent her being perceived with normal clarity in peripheral vision. The device is mainly colouristic, and monotone reproduction neutralizes it; but by it the artist accomplishes the extraordinary feat of making us feel that the bright scene is permeated by an *unseen* presence, which can yet be seen, in all the precision of a complete visualization, as soon as we turn our attention to it exclusively. A blackish grey, and various dark and middle-value blues in the costumes, are sufficiently close to Kali's hue to show that she has been deliberately coloured with a tone from another and unrelated key: her colour is that of *another world*.

Her features, which include the third eye of Śiva, are alight with remorseless joy and avidity, and yet are typically and strongly ascetic in cast: some resemblance to a famous ascetic of Akbar's time who served as "model" for Vasishta in the Beatty Jog Bahisht may be traced in them. The contrast between her absolute and terrible liveliness and the absolute and terrible deathliness of the corpses reveals an intellectuality of conception to which the naturalism of the execution serves merely as proper ornament. "He understands painting who can represent the dead without vital movement" (Viśnudharmottara). By this venerable criterion, Mughal art meets a standard set by the vanished monuments of former flowerings of Indian painting, a standard of which most traditional Indian work falls short.

There are certain evidences of remarkable formal imagination in the miniature. The chaos of death tumbling to Kali's feet and the swirling forms in her wake are such, but perhaps most admirable of all is the dreary flapping of the red banner in the silence, and the rhythmic emphasis its folds convey to the head and neck of the dead horse and the carcase hanging from the shaft below. We are reminded of the description Somadeva wrote five hundred years previously of a village temple to this same devi, Kali-Durga; "terrible with a long waving banner of red silk like the tongue of Death hungering to devour the lives of creatures."

The intensity and completeness of realization in this work is no accident. Kali-Durga in this special aspect as waster of camps was an object of formulated belief at this period. "When a hostile army comes to attack them," writes Mohsan Fani à propos of the people of Bister, "they believe that the divinity (Durga-Maveli), in the form of a woman selling vegetables, goes into the enemy camp; and whoever eats what she offers dies; and by night she comes in the form of a prostitute, and whoever is attracted and calls her meets death. They tell many strange and wonderful things of her. When in 1658-9 Tavalji Khan Beg besieged the fort of Kot Bahar, there died so many men and animals that their number exceeds all computation; this they attribute to the goddess's power."

These two examples enable us to turn with a deeper feeling for the content of Mughal painting to consider its handling of a commoner theme: the visit of a king or prince to a saint. The subject is invaluable as an accurate gauge for the seriousness of a work of art, since it is a practically universal theme of Asiatic thought, and type of the relationship of spiritual and temporal power. Even in the Islamic world the Indian personalities of King Dabshalim and the Sage Pilpay are normal. Mughal painting very frequently represents the theme as the visit of Akbar or some other prince to some actual ascetic. An example in the Fogg Museum of Harvard (fig. 9) shows Akbar as an old man with the famous Dandahari Sannyasi Chadrūp. The visit took place early in 1601. At this time

the Sannyasis believed explicitly in the possibility of the incarnation of Narayan, the "majesty without tincture" as Mohsan translates the term, in human form, Datāteri having been such an incarnation. We should therefore judge this particular work of art according to the success or vividness with which the relevant concepts, themselves very serious, are embodied in the painting. It is immediately evident, as we contemplate the royal and the saintly figures, that we are in the presence of one of the most significant representations of the ancient theme which Asia has ever produced. The two faces furnish all we could ask in the way of aid to the realization in our own minds not only of the ideal relation between sanctity and royalty but also of the nature of worldly attachment. The saint, upright in pose—a "qutb"—reproduces physiognomically the complete elimination of emotion in knowledge; there is a kind of Alpine remoteness in his aspect which is almost chilling. Akbar leans forward slightly, disturbed by eagerness; his face is intelligently quick and discursive; but its fussy dignity is momentarily troubled by an uncertainty which persuades us that any habitual complacency would have been fatuous. He looks like a man on the defensive, trying in the presence of Truth to establish his self-respect by "making his point." It is no doubt significant that when Akbar paid this visit he was on his way back to the capital from the least edifying of his public achievements, the capture by treachery of Asirgarh. Indian statecraft, not only in practice but in the Brahmin Kautilya's monumental treatise, has condoned such measures. But neither in India, as Bana's condemnation of Kautilya shows, nor elsewhere has the general moral character of man ever been actually de-moralized by metaphysicians. The saint may be beyond good and evil, but only the saint is so. Only the purely good in fact (in the sense in which for Aristotle goodness was prior to being) may well do as they like. Though Akbar could quote good canonical authority to justify an evil deed, it is not probable that so wise a man was much deceived as to the essentially hypocritical character of its authors. Ambition, like avarice and lust, may quote scripture in excellent Sanskrit; but it will wince in the presence of Angiras.

Both faces are benevolent, but the saintly benevolence is that of pure dispassionate attention, while the royal is that of an intermittent though usual kindliness.

It is to be remarked that in this miniature, which is Mughal painting at its greatest, the artist has transcended all relaxed habit: there is hardly a trace, in this consummate handling, of the usual Indian convexity of shape. The painter was truly but not merely Indian; he has achieved universality even in the character of his forms, just as the sculptors of the noblest work at Elephanta and Elura, and the master who carved the Bhagiratha at Mamallapuram, also transcended the habitual convexity of rendering they had inherited.

If we compare with this any of the numerous Jain miniatures representing the King and Ascetic theme, it is unmistakable that the Jain miniature, however "decorative," is comparatively unmeaning; the principal difference between one figure and the other being that the king wears crown and necklace and the holy man does not. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. If we are to seek in Indian for the embodiment in works of the typically Indian inward and spiritual religiousness, Mughal painting will be found to be comparable in seriousness with the Gupta painting of Ajānta and with that alone. In much of the more canonical and iconographically conventional art of India, for all the beauty of what Dr. Coomaraswamy has called "its aesthetic surfaces," intellection too often gives way to habit; we cannot avoid the conclusion that the artist is neither copying an internal model nor transforming natural appearance, but is merely



reproducing the outward shape of a previous image. Such an icon is not, in Dr. Coomaraswamy's words, a proper "support of contemplation"; it is, in its unthinking repetitiveness, an appropriate support of mumbo-jumbo.

It reinforces the adjustment of our views upon Mughal painting to reflect that Hinduism at its best in the XVIIth century was also in reaction against the traditional iconography of its mediaeval past. Not only in doctrine such as that of the early Sikh Gurus, but in the material "iconography" of the great temples to Viśnu raised by the influence of the gosains in Mughal times at Brindaban, devotion has almost eliminated imagery. It was at this, the highest, level that "Muslim" and "Hindu" came to so close an understanding in that great age. Jahangir speaks of "the science of the Vedanta, which is the science of Sufism." In his rebuke to the Vaishnava pandits: "If what you mean (by the ten incarnations of Viśnu) is the manifestation of the Divine Light in these bodies, that Light Itself is existent equally in all created things"; and in their final reply, at the end of a long discussion: "As our imagination fails to conceive a formless personality, we do not find any way to know Him without the aid of a form. We have therefore made these ten forms the means of conceiving and knowing Him," we see two intellectualities sharply distinguished; but it is the Emperor, and not the pandits, who appears as the "Comprehensor" of the ancient texts. The humility of Jahangir's relationship with Chadrup is in marked contrast with his contempt for sectarian superstition; we may see in him as in Akbar the "classic" type of truth-seeking Indian king.

Akbar, moreover, one of the few kings in history known to have been visited by mystic illumination, was thereafter, if not before, unbound from any exclusiveness of creed. He was not a Muslim. His saying: "Divine worship in monarchs consists in their justice and good administration," as an equation of Sacrifice and Works, might if translated into Sanskrit be flawlessly interpolated into the Bhagavad Gita.

It is unnecessary to say more. The arts which Mughal patronage elicited from the inexhaustible reservoir of Indian craftsmanship exhibit Indian art at its best as Akbar and, to a less degree, Jahangir exhibit Indian kingship at its best. Mughal art is no more "Muhammadan" than Akbar was a "Muhammadan." It is only as narrow sectarians, of the type which Akbar and the saints alike contemn, that we can make any attempt to segregate the achievements of Mughal art from the main stream of Indian culture. Those XVIth and XVIIth century manuscripts and albums are the Ajānta of our millennium; and their delight is, like Ajānta's, in the beauty of the visible world at the noblest heightening of personality. The kingliness of kings and the humbleness of the poor, the wisdom of the wise and the fever of the gambler, and always the serenity of the "family of Nirvana"; all the difference between ape and elephant and the unity of the vital spirit in both—such things can only be painted when art is at its most athletic.

Perhaps our attempt to restore Mughal painting to its rightful place as India's most serious painting, at least since Ajānta, may best end in the application to it of Dr. Coomaraswamy's profound characterization of Gupta painting, with his references appropriately transposed. "This is an art 'of great courts charming the mind by their noble routine' (Harsa-carita); adorned with *alamkāras* and well acquainted with *bhāva-bheda*. The specifically religious element is no longer insistent, no longer anti-social; it is manifested in life, and in an art that reveals life not in a mode of opposition to spirituality, but as an intricate ritual fitted to the consummation of every perfect experience. . . . The ultimate meaning of life is not forgotten, witness the reverent ascetic

portraits and the peace, profound and intimate, of the contemplative gatherings (fig. 10), but a culmination and a perfection have been attained in which the inner and outer life are indivisible ; it is this psycho-physical identity that determines the universal quality of Mughal painting. All this is apparent, not in the themes of the pictures . . . but intrinsically in the painting itself. Nor is there any stronger evidence of the profundity of recognition characteristic of this golden age than that afforded by its extensions. . . ." For no sooner had Rajasthan and the Deccan, Gujarat and Bengal, come into contact with Mughal painting than the old "superstitious" modes passed away, and new styles, embodying what they wanted and what they could of Mughal variety and expressive power, arose.

The parallel with Europe is curiously close. Just as we see the fascinating women of Correggio and the mere noblemen of Van Dyck playing in that dream of Nature which is the park of Watteau or Gainsborough, but look in vain for the virile ferocity and craft of Titian's sitters, or the virile sanctity of Rembrandt's, so we find the modest beauties and the adolescent princes of the Mughal albums, dressed as Rādhā and Kṛīṣṇa, or even as Parvati and Śiva, playing at love among the groves and terraces of Brindāban, in the exquisitely delicate and sentimental rococo of Rajput hill-painting. But not Akbar, not Chadrup, nor Asaf Khan. The "old wolves of the state" would have been presences hardly more unsuitable than any authentic saint in that feminine and soulful art so dear to belated chivalry in a changing world.

This is not to wish that the art of Kangra were other than it is—far from it. Dr. Coomaraswamy has said in what is to a historian one of his most valuable essays : "to wish that the art of any period had been other than it was is the same as to wish that it had never been. Every style is complete in itself, and to be justified accordingly, not to be judged by the standards of a former or any other age.

With one voice which is wondrous  
He giveth utterance to thoughts innumerable,  
That are received by audiences of all sorts,  
Each understanding them in his own way."

## RAJPUT ART: ITS PROBLEMS

BY DR. H. GOETZ (CURATOR, BARODA STATE MUSEUM)

**A**. K. COOMARASWAMY is to us the greatest living authority on Indian art. On his shoulders the mantle of E. B. Havell had fallen to interpret to the world the message of Indian art, and he has accomplished this task with a penetrating sensitiveness, a depth of knowledge and grandeur of cultural and religious vision far surpassing those of his predecessor. There is hardly a branch of Indian art to which he has not contributed some pioneer research work.

But there is one aspect of which he can claim to be the sole discoverer: Rājput art. Not that he had been the first to study and publish works of this style. For architecture this had already been done by J. Fergusson, for painting by Baron Fr. von Huegel, Baron Ch. E. de Ujfalvy and T. H. Hendley, for the decorative arts by Sir George Watt, Percy Brown, Sir George Birdwood and again T. H. Hendley. But he has been the first to discover Rājput art as a distinct branch of the Indian tradition, with a strong individuality of its own and with not less distinct ideals and conventions. His first essay in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1912 opened a new page of Indian art history, revealing a late Hindu tradition of beauty hardly touched by Muslim art and by the worldly splendour of the Mughal Empire in the midst of which it was flourishing. His great work on *Rājput Painting* (1916) introduced us to a whole unknown world of chivalry, romantic love and bhakti mysticism. And this flower of the late Mediaeval folk spirit has proved to be one of the chief agents in divesting India of that inaccessible strangeness which had veiled her to the West since the days of the ancient Greeks. For Rājput mysticism as explained by Coomaraswamy, and reflected in the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, had stricken a note which finds its response in the Christian poetry of Jacobone da Todi, Gertrudis of Helfta, Mechthildis of Magdeburg, St. John of the Cross or, in our days, of Francis Thompson and Rainer Maria Rilke; Rājput chivalrous love lyrics which Coomaraswamy also had translated in the Bangīya Padābali, extracts from the Rasik Priyā, etc., in the old French, Italian and Iberian Troubadours; and Rājput painting in the art of Cimabue, Giotto, Duccio, Simone Martini, and their late successor, William Blake.

As it had to be expected, *Rājput Painting* started a flood of publications, books as well as articles, by O. C. Gangoly, N. C. Mehta, Ajit Ghose, S. N. Gupta, J. C. French, L. Binyon, Mukandi Lal, the writer of these lines, and others. They have brought us a considerable expansion of our iconographic knowledge of Rājput painting, but only a very limited improvement of our historical knowledge of it, and very little for the rest of Rājput art. To be honest, we must confess that Rājput art studies have landed in an impasse, and that we must completely revise our fundamental approach before they can be definitely placed on a solid basis.

It is not difficult to discover what actually is wrong. As the professional archaeologists dismissed the new art as not sufficiently "archaic" for their interest, Coomaraswamy's pioneer work had to be continued by connoisseurs, artists, private collectors or foreign museum curators. Therefore not field research, but the collector's

table determined the approach. Much was made of Rājput painting whereas Rājput architecture, though known, received a most perfunctory treatment if it was not ignored at all, and whereas Rājput sculpture has never been consciously studied. But is not art the total expression of man's life, needing a realization in all its aspects? However, this sin of disconnecting Rājput painting from Rājput art as one living organism implies the second sin of disconnecting Rājput art from the realities of Rājput life. Because Rājput painting is full of romance and mysticism, scholars have tended to treat its historical background as an idyllic timeless world immune from the influences of an age full of wars, revolutions and cultural cross-currents, or at least to tune down, as far as possible, the picture in such a sense; though we know but too well that the mysticism of Mediaeval European, Chinese or Tibetan art, or the romance of Īrānīan or old Italian painting had been not a mirror of a saintly or idyllic real life, but the spiritual reaction against the oppression of insecure, bloody and often barbarian times. And this second misconception implied the third one. Instead of judging Rājput art on its own merits, its "traditional" Hindu religiosity and literary background were accepted as an unquestioned evidence that it had to be regarded as a continuation of classic and high Mediaeval Hindu art. As if the Confucian tradition had ever been a proof that the Chinese art of the Han and T'ang Dynasties were a direct continuation of the Chow style; or Christianity, Latin literature and reinterpreted fragments of late Roman art a reason to accept the Romanesque style of Mediaeval Europe as the direct descendant of the Christian Roman civilization. And as the logical consequence of those three erroneous premises there followed the last one: a wrong chronology and a not less objectionable classification system of hypothetic local "schools" of painting.

An unprejudiced study such as the writer of these lines could undertake in the course of the last decade, reveals a very different picture. Rājput art has been not less all-comprising than any other national art. Secular buildings in a distinct Rājput style can be traced as far back as the ruins of Mahobā and Ranod. Since the XVth century this primitive tradition flourished into a beautiful rich style, assimilating many elements of contemporary Muslim architecture in Malwa and Gujarāt. Since the XVIIth century this earlier Rājput architecture was superseded by the classical Mughal taste. But in the course of the XVIIIth and early XIXth centuries buildings in this latter style not only became much more numerous and elegant than under the Mughals, but also assumed a national character, related to and yet different from Mughal architecture in the same way as e.g. the French Renaissance in its relation to the Italian, or the Austrian Rococo to its French model. In its last stages this late Rājput style of architecture arrived at a completely new form system in which the former classic Mughal features were reduced to the same subordinate position to which e.g. the inherited Roman elements had been reduced in the Teutonic "Romanesque" architecture of Mediaeval Europe. Temple architecture has been much more conservative. It had started from a conscious renaissance of the high Mediaeval tradition; but even here the ornament was reinterpreted in a new spirit. And already in the XVIth century the Muslim battlement screens and domes were introduced, in the XVIIth the Muslim arch and vault, in the early XVIIIth century roof chhatrīs, until in the later XVIIIth a pure Rājput temple type evolved from the house chapel.

This outline of Rājput architecture throws some interesting light on the vicissitudes of Rājput art. It reveals the co-existence of a Hindu "renaissance" architecture side by side with a genuine Rājput style, and, as counter-influence, two irruptions of

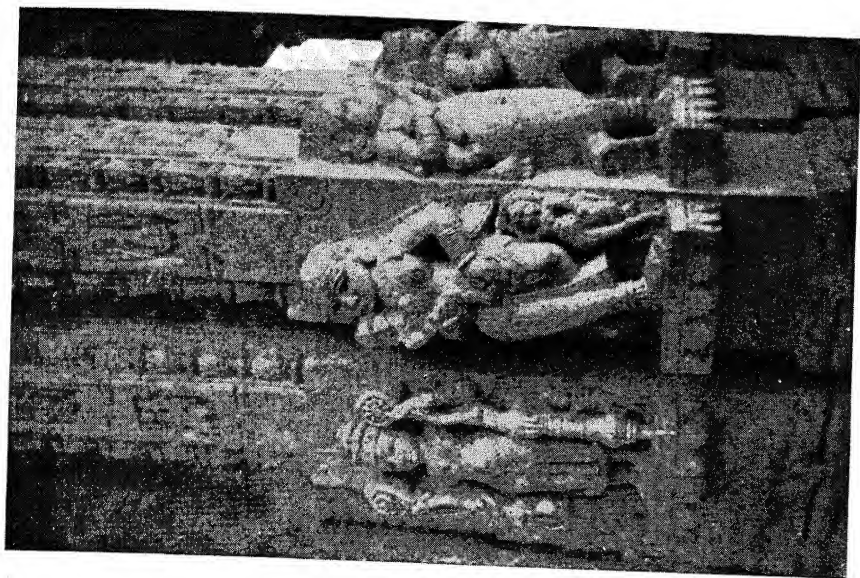


FIG. 2—RAJPUT RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE (EARLY STAGE): SCULPTURED PILLAR FROM JAGAT SIROMANI-JI TEMPLE, SECOND QUARTER OF 17TH CENTURY. AMBER

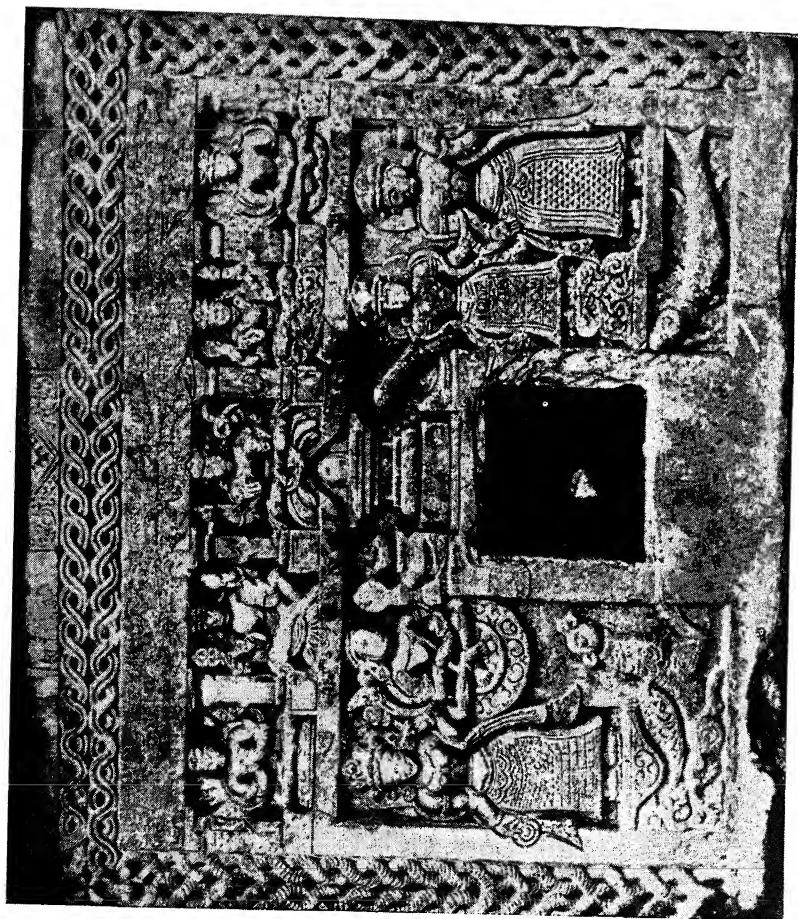


FIG. 1—THE PRECURSORS OF RAJPUT ART :  
FOUNTAIN STONE OF RANA AJAYA PALA A.D. 1225 (?) AT SAI CHURAH,  
WESTERN CHAMBA STATE (AFTER J. PH. VOGEL- ANTIQUITIES OF CHAMBA  
STATE, I pl. 34)



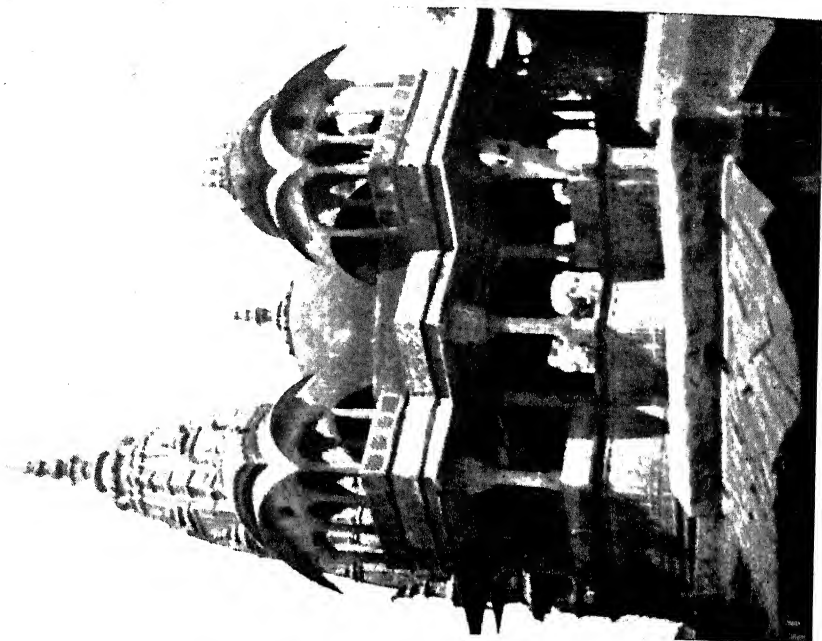


FIG. 4—RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE: TEMPLE AT KOTAH,  
EARLY 18TH CENTURY



FIG. 3—PURE RAJPUT SCULPTURE: RAS LILA RELIEF FROM  
PALACE OF BIR SINGH DEO BUNDELA (A.D. 1605-27) DATIA



PLATE XXIV

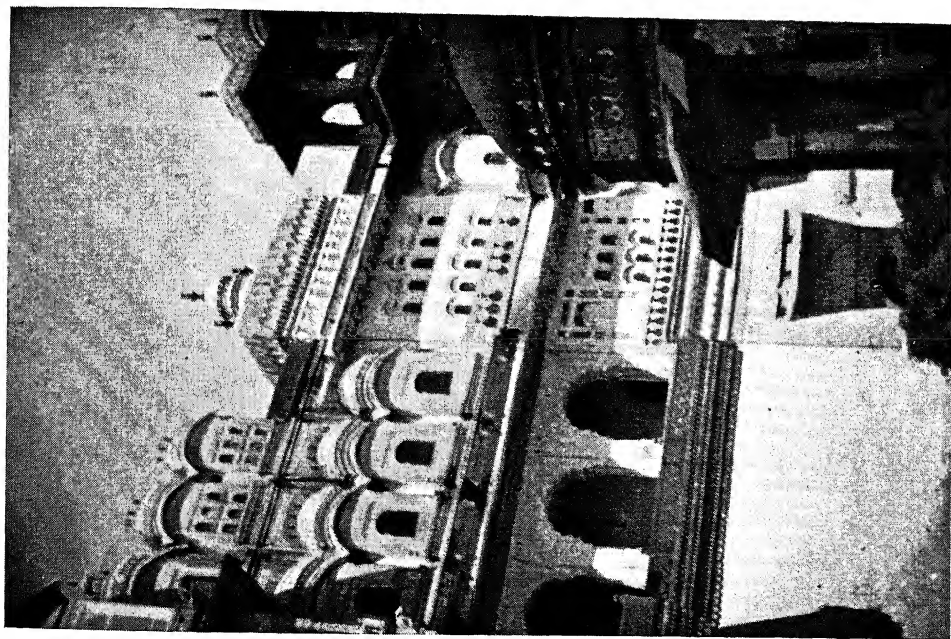


FIG. 5—RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE : HAWA MAHAL  
EARLY 18TH CENTURY KOTAH.

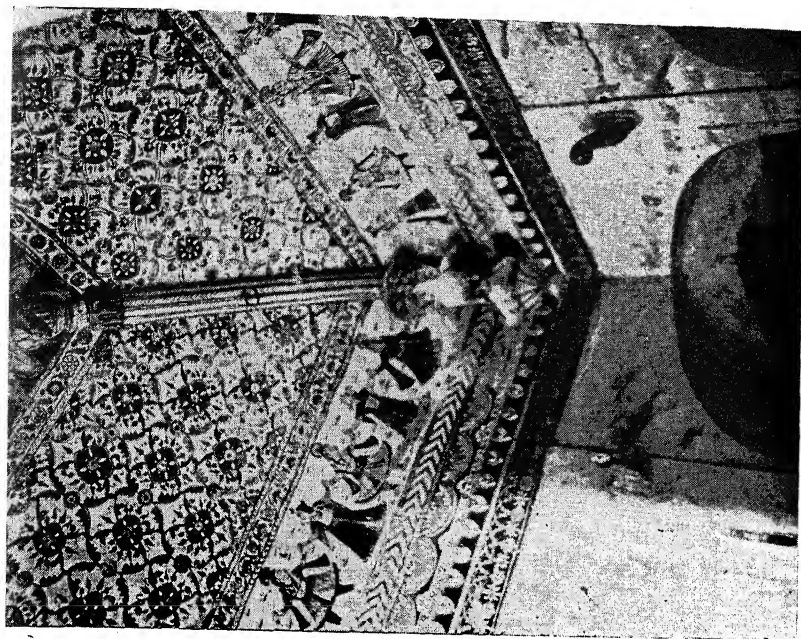


FIG. 6—RAJPUT WALL PAINTING. CEILING IN THE  
LAKSHMI-NARAYANA TEMPLE, ORCHHA (BEGINNING  
OF 19TH CENTURY.



FIG. 8—RAJPUT ART (GOETZ)

A RAJPUT PAINTING OF THE EARLIEST STAGE. ILLUSTRATION FROM A MEGHADUTA MS. OF THE 16TH CENTURY: A MORE ARCHAIC TYPE THAN THE BUNDELA RAGMALAS.



FIG. 7—RAJPUT ART (GOETZ)

THE PRECURSORS OF RAJPUT ART: DETAILS FROM THE DECORATION OF THE OLD TEMPLE MANDOR (8TH CENTURY) SHOWING EVIDENCE OF THE BARBARISATION OF EARLY MEDIEVAL HINDU ART UNDER THE GURJARAS

Muslim taste in the XVth and XVIIth—early XVIIIth centuries. On the other hand, Rājput architecture developed a distinct style of its own in the times when the Rājput states enjoyed independence, i.e. during most of the XVIth and early XVIIth, and again during the later XVIIIth—early XIXth centuries.

However, this very swinging between the poles of foreign influence and self-assertion can likewise be traced in a critical examination of the chronology of Rājput painting. Coomaraswamy's chronology and that of almost all his followers is incorrect. He ante-dated the paintings of the later XVIIIth and early XIXth centuries in order to construct a continuous "pure" Rājput style curve which has never existed. For from the death of Akbar to the end of the second third of the XVIIIth century the Mughal style ruled uncontested in Rājasthānī painting, and only the first and the last decades of this period can be described as a "Mughal-Rājput" transition style. Not only this! In many Rājput states even the artists executing those "Rājput" paintings were Muslims. And even after a pure Rājput style had developed, isolated Mughal style irruptions occurred time and again. In the Himālaya the Mughal irruption was shorter. It set in with Nādir Shāh's invasion, as a consequence of which the Gūlēr school was founded by refugees from the Panjāb; then the invasions of Ahmad Shāh led to the foundation of Mughal branch schools in Kāngrā, Chambā, Pūnch and Rāmnaḡar. All paintings in the "Kāngrā" style are later than these four foreign schools in the Himālaya; a fact which explains the strong Mughal influence in composition, outline, colour and perspective of the "Kāngrā" paintings. On the other hand are the majority of "Basohli" paintings not "primitives" at all. The most outspoken "primitives" actually are degenerates of the time of anarchy in the Himālaya between the collapse of Mughal control there in the later years of Aurangzēb and the establishment, after 1760, of the three federations round Kāngrā, Chambā and Jammū. The genuine Basohli (and Nūrpur, Chambā, Kulū, Maṇḍī) primitives stand very near to early Rājasthānī painting.

For the hypothetic direct links between high Mediaeval Hindu and the different branches of Rājput painting, postulated by Coomaraswamy and formerly assumed also by the writer of these lines, have never existed, with one sole exception, the link via Gujarāt. For one reason: The Muslim invasions had completely destroyed the old Hindu art of the North West, not so much by a conscious iconoclasm, but by the complete uprooting of all settled social conditions which are the prerequisite of all artistic activities. The price which the Rājputs had paid for their liberty, or at least semi-independence, had been a relapse into barbarism. Since the decline of Tughlaq imperialism towards the end of the XIVth century, however, Hindu civilization surviving in Gujarāt, Kāthiāwār and some centres of Rājputānā, again began to spread over the whole of Rājputānā and Central India. In the late XVIth and early XVIIth century, under Akbar's and Jahāngīr's benevolent and tolerant reigns, it was reimported into the Punjāb Himālaya via the Mughal court, and the religious centres of Muttrā, Brindāban, Prayāg, Hardwār, etc., where the rājās of Rājputānā and of the Himālaya, and their retainers, met in attendance on the emperor or as pilgrims. The artists who at Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, etc., were superseded by more fashionable masters trained in the Mughal kār-khānas, found a refuge at the smaller courts of the ambitious rājās of Nūrpur and Basohli.

From all this it is obvious that there exists nothing like a straight and quiet style development of clear-cut local schools. The unceasing warfare and intrigues which divided the Rājputs from their very origins up to British rule, the rebellions against the sultāns and emperors, temporary hegemonies of imperial court favourites or trusted

painting. Even in the high-Mediaeval temple sculptures of Rājputānā the general art conception is more abstract than in the East and South, and even in the Śākta temples with their highly erotic subjects the female ideal is not so much that of fully developed ripe fertility than that of the blossoming girl, i.e. the later ideal of Rājput painting. With other words, the Rājput ideal of female beauty stands nearer to the Western conception as expressed in Greek and Mediaeval European art. Figures like those at Kiradu in Jodhpur State or Modhera in Baroda State often come strikingly near to the best of Greek statuary, whereas, on the other hand, Rājput painting is so similar to early Trecentist Italian painting that it would be possible to transfer whole figures from one art to the other.

However, it is obvious that Rājput art is independent from Western art, and that these similarities have nothing to do with external influences. In order to discover some solution for this problem we must, therefore, study another, so far completely neglected aspect of Rājput art: sculpture. There exists a pure Rājput sculptural style parallel to Rājput painting and architecture: ceiling reliefs, memorial stones, and stone and bronze statues of rājās and deities, in temples and funeral monuments. And to them there must also be reckoned the "Mughal" horse, elephant and rider statues of Akbar's and Jahāngīr's reigns. This tradition can be traced back to the end of the XIVth century. And though it seems that, as in the case of Rājput painting, also in that of Rājput sculpture contemporary Muslim-Īrānian art (Saljuq and Mongol sculpture) has acted as catalysator, there is sufficient evidence that its typological pedigree goes back beyond the chaotic times of Muslim conquest, to a folk art which during the high Middle Ages had flourished side by side with classical Hindu sculpture, and no doubt is also responsible for the peculiar character of the "West-Indian" school. However, the character of all these sculptures is the very opposite of the Hindu tradition: Simple volumes with grand melodious outlines, and details filled in merely by means of enched lines; not the least interest in the body as a sensuous experience, but a romantic atmosphere in all shades from bloody terror to sweet love. It is the style of the royal Kushāna statues and of the Sāsānian sculptures of Īrān. And likewise are the pictures on Sāsānian frescoes and silver ware the next relatives to Rājput painting. Finally it can neither be accidental that part of the ornament of the Gurjara-Pratihāra temples at Mandor, Osīā, Surwaya, etc, has its next relatives in Iran and Byzantium, and the "folk art" of the fountain stones of Churāh in Chambā in the ornamentation of the Alans, Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Langobards. With other words: What differentiates Rājput from Hindu art, is its "Īrānian" spirit.

There has been much embittered discussion whether the ancestors of the Rājputs had been foreigners or Indians. As a matter of fact the whole dispute is the result of wrong premises. We cannot deny that since the times of Alexander the Great a migration of tribes from the North-West to Central India has gone on with only short interruptions, and that just between the collapse of the Gupta Empire and the first emergence of the Rājput clans this immigration actually had amounted to an invasion which practically wiped out all older settlements west of Malwa and north of Gujarāt. But had these immigrants and invaders been foreigners? With the exception of the Ephtalites and a not very numerous Turko-Mongol element amongst the Gurjaras they were of the same racial stock as the Hindu upper classes, brahmins and kshatryas. How far they should be classified as Īrānians or Indo-Āryans can hardly be decided as they came from the Indo-Afghān-Baluch border area separating Hindu and Īrānian



civilization and religion. Many had been Mithra worshippers but had long since become, via Buddhism and Saurism, Śaivas and Vaishnavas, now venerating the sun under the image of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa. Foreigners they were not in contrast to the Āryans, but to racially mixed Hindu society; foreigners they were not from a religious point of view, but from that of cultural level, wild, barbarian frontier men in contrast to the over-refined Hindus of Gupta civilization and its Central and South Indian successor states. However, what we call Mediaeval Hindu art, with all its sensuality and mystic spirituality, had been evolved in those cultured groups of a mixed Hindu population in the East, Centre and South. And whatever may have been the origin of the leading families, the overwhelming influence of the general social milieu had to be felt earlier or later. Thus what above has been defined as "Īrānian," in contrast to Hindu spirit actually is a mere repetition of the much older conflict between "Āryan" and "pre-Āryan" outlook, with that qualification that it was at the same time the contrast between a young ethnic spirit and an old cultural heritage.

The later Mediaeval history of Hindu North-Western India is that of a political and cultural reconquest. The barbarian Gurjara empire was first converted to Hindu high civilization, like the Teutonic conqueror states of the West to Latin-Christian civilization. Then its fragments were conquered and colonized by the most civilized Rājput clans—however, without displacing the less cultivated earlier Rājput settlers—and only the Panjāb and Afghānistān seem not to have emerged from the state of barbarism into which they had relapsed after the Ephtalite invasion. For what we know of cultural life under the Śāhī rulers of Kābul and Wahind, is very poor and barbarian. Mediaeval art in Central India, Rājputānā and the Eastern Panjāb was an import from the East and South, a fact which explains its more or less "pure" Hindu character, but also the barbarian "Īrānian" strains which everywhere break through it.

Thus we can understand why a genuine Rājput art evolved only after the Muslim conquest. When the Muslim invasions had upset the old Rājput states, their precarious "Hindu" court civilization and art disappeared, and though in the XVth and XVIth centuries a conscious renaissance of it was attempted at, life had changed. The artists from Gujarāt who built up a new art, had already worked also for Muslim sultāns. Thus no tradition of sufficient authority existed, and a new genuinely national art could develop. The fervent Krishna mysticism, with its new themes and democratic tendencies, was perhaps not so much another element contributing to the creation of this national art than a different form of expression of the same creative spirit which brought forth Rājput art.

Rājput art, thus, is an offshoot neither of Muslim nor of Hindu art. It has learnt and assimilated very much from both, yet its spirit is different. As the Indo-Muslim spirit was the expression of a mixed Īrānian-Turkish ruler-class with some Arab and Indian strains, and as the Mediaeval Hindu spirit that of an assimilation of originally "Āryan" ruling castes, akin to the Īrānians, by "pre-Āryan" (Dravidian?) indigenous Indian middle and lower castes: The Rājput spirit was the expression of barbarian "Āryan" latecomers and Īrānians converted to the old Hindu culture tradition.

What here has been outlined, at the hand of a comprehensive material, most of which still awaits publication, goes considerably beyond Coomaraswamy's own results. But thirty years have passed since the publication of *Rājput Painting*, a long time in our present revolution of life and ideas. Though Coomaraswamy also later on has occasionally published additional interesting paintings, his principal researches have more and more drifted into



new channels such as gain importance with progressing age : philosophy, mysticism and mythological symbolism. It was not his fault that his followers have not expanded the field of Rājput research—with the only exception of J. Ch. French who, however, lacked breadth of knowledge and critical method,—but stuck to his first results as to an orthodox dogma. And yet under the circumstances under which *Rājput Painting* was written, it could not be more than a first approach to a new field of research. As such it is the work of a genius, and its fundamental results stand unchallenged until the present day. But written without the opportunity of long local researches on the spot, it could not yet envisage the whole field of Rājput art, but had to restrict itself to an easily accessible type of it, miniature painting. Written in a time when not only Indian, but all Asiatic art studies were just outgrowing the preparatory stage and still had to struggle for acknowledgment, it could not yet realize the whole complexity of the historical and cultural background. Written at a time when art history as a scientific discipline was still handicapped by a thoroughly materialistic approach of “tradition,” “classics,” “influences”—as if art were a mere affair of superficial imitation, not inspired creation—it could not get rid of a fundamentally traditionalistic approach to the Rājput art problem, however much it emphasized the religious inspiration both of the artists and of their patrons. And yet this very work has been a wonderful clarion call against the superannuated traditional values of its time ; like the whole life work of Coomaraswamy.

Indeed, this is the greatness and tragedy of Coomaraswamy ! To have been the pioneer of a new age of mankind. In an Americo-European world which acknowledged other races merely as servile colonial peoples, he was amongst the first to champion the cause of Asia, not as some interesting petrefact of earlier stages of man's development, but as a cultural equal to the West. In a world still dominated by the one-sided Greek ideal of beauty, he raised the banner of Indian art, and with better arguments than E. B. Havell. In an age of crude materialism he became one of the most interesting and successful interpreters and prophets of Indian spiritualism. But the past never returns, and when old principles are taken up again, it is in a novel interpretation and novel application. Our philosophy has, on completely different roads, come back to the old Indian Vedāntic ideals, to a new gigantic vista of a never-ending cosmic creative process bringing forth an endless wealth of endlessly new forms, but all expressions of the same eternally unchanging “energy,” the same ineffable parabrahman. In this perspective of creative evolution the future becomes more essential to us than the past, the growing synthesis of East and West more important than their past conflicts, the common cosmic experience of Asiatic and Western art more valuable than temporary clashes of exterior traditions, and art history not so much a study of those traditions, but of creation triumphingly overcoming them. And just Rājput art is a great example of the creative spirit finding, against overwhelming odds of authoritative outside influences, its way towards self-realization, the only way of genuine art.

PLATE XXVI



FIG. 9—RAJPUT ART (GOETZ)

PORTRAIT OF MAHARAJA ABHAI SINGH OF JODHPUR (BARODA MUSEUM). EXAMPLE OF A  
SURVIVAL OF THE MUGHAL-RAJPUT STYLE OF THE 17TH-18TH CENTURY

PLATE XXVII



FIG. 10—RAJPUT ART (GOETZ)

PORTRAIT OF MAHARAJA BIJAI SINGH OF JODHPUR. (BARODA MUSEUM), BELONGING TO THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY AND REVEALING VERY STRONG MUGHAL INFLUENCES, BUT WITH THE FIRST INDICATIONS OF THE COMING EVOLUTION TOWARDS THE SECOND HEIGHT OF RAJPUT ART OF ABOUT A.D. 1800

## THE VALIDITY OF INDIAN HANDICRAFTS IN THIS INDUSTRIAL ERA

BY RICHARD B. GREGG (THE PUTNEY SCHOOL, PUTNEY, VERMONT, U.S.A.)

THE question of the validity of handicrafts in this day is, like the validity of a religion or a traditional diet, largely in the realm of assumptions, matters of faith which are accepted or rejected but which can rarely be greatly altered in an individual by argument. Nevertheless, just as it is desirable to discuss and try to clarify metaphysical principles or the axioms of a geometry, so it will be worth while to consider this matter of handicrafts. And in view of Ananda Coomaraswamy's deep interest in Indian handicrafts, this book in his honour seems a fitting place for such a discussion.

The climate of opinion, certainly in the Occident and increasingly in the Orient and Africa, is all in favour of big machinery and large-scale commerce and finance. The white man is deeply proud of his technological and scientific achievements. His ideas of progress depend largely on the changes caused by his technology. His assumptions about machinery and his pride, together with the inertia of inherited group habits, are strong elements in the general modern attitude toward machine technology. This modern attitude prevails among intellectuals in most parts of the world, and, in the West, among manual workers also, both in industry and agriculture.

That there are vast intellectual achievements and immense power in modern machine technology nobody can deny. This movement of the mind and this power are probably what chiefly fascinate the young people in most lands and most cultures. But not enough consideration has been given to the moral and cultural implications of machine industrialism. Whither is it taking us? There is too little realization of the fact that modern industry and commerce, by their very scale, require for their successful operation a corresponding growth in both the sensitiveness and strength of man's moral nature, and that this growth must be fully expressed in politics as well as in commerce and industry. If you are going to do steady business with men on the other side of the world, whose culture is different from yours, understanding must develop, mutual adjustments must be made, expectations must be met, promises must be kept, all with a care and scrupulousness not hitherto observed. There has been no development in man's moral nature to a degree corresponding to the development of his technology. Indeed in some respects the moral nature of many people has been coarsened and weakened and degraded. This inequality of development of these two sides of man's nature has created grave dangers.

In the Christian scriptures (Psalm 62 : 11) it is said that "Power belongeth unto God." And one of the wisest of historians, Lord Acton, said that "Power corrupts ; absolute power corrupts absolutely." That is, the greater the power, the greater becomes the corruption of character of those people who wield it. That is the reason for the other biblical sayings, "Put not your trust in princes" (Psalm 146 : 3) ; "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118 : 9). This unreliability of those in temporal authority, due to the poison of power, applies in a secular culture not

only to hereditary monarchs but also to presidents, prime ministers, generals—all those in positions of power growing out of human organizations of any sort.

In ancient Hindu society the dangers from the poison of power were kept within control by the caste separation of temporal power and spiritual authority and the subjection of the former to the latter, also occasionally by non-violent resistance as *dharmā*, *rāja-tyāga*, *rāja*, *ṭatravigarhyate*. The head of society was not the Kshatrya but the Brahman. The State was not omnipotent. (See *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, by A. K. Coomaraswamy.) The Brahman, as I understand it, was usually excluded from actual administrative duties and thereby escaped the corruptions of that kind of power. He prevailed purely by moral and intellectual and spiritual influence. Thus Hindu society really believed that "Power belongeth unto God," and that he who uses it must act as trustee for God. In Moslem society there was also a control of temporal power by moral and spiritual principles. And in that other long-enduring culture, the Chinese, the person of chief honour and authority was not the politician, the financier, the manufacturer or the merchant, but the scholar. All these cultures, and perhaps all old traditional cultures, recognized the superiority of intangible heavenly principles, and organized and operated their societies upon that superiority.

Western society, however, has become wholly secular, and its vast development of material power has got beyond control and run amok, smashing other cultures all over the world, and now with the atomic bomb threatening to destroy itself also. It would seem, therefore, that to restrain this immense wild power so as to preserve civilization or culture in any part of the world, there must certainly be a return to the guidance of metaphysical principles. Probably that return will not occur on a large scale until after the great catastrophe. But other measures also, I believe, will be necessary in order to make those principles effective. We must recognize that secular power should also be reduced and partly controlled by a continual active emphasis on small-scale organizations in all realms of activity and by support and development of hand work in both agriculture and industry. No culture can endure unless the family and the village are more important than the corporation or the State unless the family-size farm and the village craftsman are more important than the huge farm or the factory. Quality is more important than quantity.

The assumption of socially-minded supporters of machine industrialism is that the great increase of production of all material things by industrialism can be and will be fairly distributed among all people and thus poverty, the ancient curse, may be abolished. But in fact that has not happened. The contrasts of wealth between different peoples, different classes, and different nations and races is now greater than ever before. The rise in standards of living among the poorer classes of Europe—and America—has been more than offset by the degradation of the standards of living of more hundreds of millions in Asia and Africa. Nor can this condition be corrected as long as society remains secular, for without restraint by spiritual principles the corruption of power is without limit. Socialism could not restrain industrialism nor reduce the danger of corruption of power, for the basis of socialist theory is materialism. Love of man is not a sufficient basis for a long enduring culture; there must also be love of God. God is not only immanent; He is also transcendent. Neither aspect may be denied without peril. If in contradiction it be claimed that the great culture of China was wholly secular and without metaphysics, I would refer to the frequent mention of the way of Heaven, the decrees of



## THE VALIDITY OF INDIAN HANDICRAFTS IN THIS INDUSTRIAL ERA

Heaven, the will of Heaven in the writing of all the great Chinese philosophers, Confucius, Mo Ti, Mo Tsu, Lao Tsu, Mencius, Chuang Chou, Hsun Ch'ing, and others.

Among the supporters of machine technology there is probably also a dim assumption that man has never abandoned any tool or device for using physical power that he has invented ; so that large machinery is here to stay, and therefore it is folly to think that hard work can continue to be valid. That was perhaps true as long as the total powers unleashed by those inventions did not exceed the powers of man's co-operative habits. But the advent of the atomic bomb on top of all the other inventions has released cosmic power and put the entire civilization of the white man into very grave jeopardy. I myself think that the probability of the destruction of this civilization is very great. Power not only corrupts character ; it diminishes and warps imagination and sympathy. The holders of power therefore will not be likely to alter their habits in time to prevent another great war, nor will their underlying peoples be able to compel such a change. If this civilization is destroyed, I suspect that the leaders of other cultures and even the headstrong young men will be persuaded that the path of secular machine technology is folly and will no longer try to follow it. The story of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* would then come true.

I would not say that man can never develop his moral and spiritual powers enough to control the physical power of scientific machine technology. But in order to do this he would have to lay very great emphasis on moral and spiritual affairs for several centuries in order to redress the present under-development. This effort would have to engross his thoughts, his will, his imagination and his energies so extensively that technology would not merely mark time but would, I think, have to be considerably reduced. During such a period, hand work would become not only important but widespread and necessary. Of course none of the technologically trained nations will do this voluntarily, but after the next world war the reduction of technology in them will probably happen perforce.

Machine industrialism together with large-scale finance are smashing themselves, their devotees and their underlying civilization for the following reasons :—

Industrialism and big finance create limitless desire for power, and power corrupts those who employ it. These two evils ruin peasant life and handicrafts. They create vast soil erosion which will soon end in deserts. In the opinion of competent soil specialists, more tillable top soil has been washed into the sea during the past 150 years than during the entire previous history of the world. The growth of modern cities and their sewage systems caused by industrialism, has upset the nitrogen cycle by which soil fertility is maintained. Industrialism exhausts fuel supplies, both coal and oil. It destroys forests faster than they can be renewed, thus increasing floods, adding to soil erosion and diminishing water power. Industrialism and finance have created vast tyrannies, have increasingly caused wars and made war more destructive. Finally, in league with science, they have created the atomic bomb. The values of industrialism accrue to its users only so long as there are some people not industrialized. Since the machine can produce faster than people can consume, as soon as all nations are industrialized there will be no place in which to dispose of the surplus things. We can no longer shrug our shoulders and say that we will solve that problem when we get to it. Destructive processes are already at our heels. All the industrialized nations except Russia are on the verge of great and rapid declines of population. This is quite aside from war and its effects. In two or three generations the industrialization of Russia will cause the same results there. These shrinkages of population will smash capitalism and

industrialism and socialism. In sum, put in terms of physical science, industrialism speeds up entropy on this planet and is thus destructive of life in both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

Some may say that the evil resides not in industrialism but in its combination with capitalistic finance; that under socialism industrialism would become wholly beneficial. No doubt socialism would end the power of private finance, but in place of that would come the power of the political and economic administrator. Socialism involves large organization, and that in itself centralizes and enlarges power. Thus under socialism power is not reduced; it only changes in form. The temptations and corruptions of power remain.

By contrast, hand work is valid and perennial because instead of wasting the stored up solar energies of the earth it works on the current income of solar energy. It limits the total physical power at man's disposal, and hence the total economic and political power of a leader or of a nation. Thus it reduces the temptations and poisons of power to something more nearly within human control. Predominant handwork limits the size of populations and thus helps to maintain an ecological balance between man and the other animals and between all animals and vegetation. It would limit the size of cities and therefore help keep a sounder balance between town life and rural life. By helping to restore the peasantries it would make possible a restoration of the soil upon which the whole life of man, land, animals and vegetation depends. These results would accrue from handwork only if society had a sound metaphysical basis. I have not forgotten that although handwork prevailed during the Roman Empire nevertheless that culture went to pieces. Yes, but that culture had lost its metaphysical basis. Its leaders no longer firmly believed in any religion. They had lost all sense of direction and self-control. Nevertheless I suspect that the prevalence of handwork enabled the Roman Empire to last longer than will the modern empires of industrialism.

Handwork restores man's sense of responsibility and his actual responsibility. It promotes sociability at work. It restores the craftsman's initiative, creative freedom, self-respect, and independence. When predominant it promotes the creativeness of the majority of people and thereby brings man back more nearly to being an image of God. Thus it restores the probabilities of man's contentment with life, and thus helps to create a stable society. As a balanced way of life, handwork is more consistent with service of God. It therefore can become a true sacred ritual. By contrast, how difficult and rare it would be for a worker on the assembly line of a Ford factory to think of himself as engaged then in a sacred ritual.

In a society based, organized and motivated by sound metaphysical principles the handworker is an artist. All his responsibility and creative talents are called into play. Whenever and as soon as handwork predominates, quality of production is automatically emphasized and grows. Under handwork there can be little difference in the amount of production by different craftsmen. Hence they can compete for customers only by means of quality. All the ingenuity that in modern machine industry strives to enhance quantity would, under handwork, turn to the more satisfying effort for quality. Until handwork once more predominates, the customers should call loudly and steadily for the best quality and thus help maintain the essential skills and freedoms. In every way the craftsmen should be encouraged to produce the finest kind of work, not the most precious and expensive, but always work of thorough excellence.

It has been noted that all the great religions of the world originated among pastoral

## THE VALIDITY OF INDIAN HANDICRAFTS IN THIS INDUSTRIAL ERA

or agricultural cultures. That also means that all great metaphysics developed in a cultural matrix of handwork.

Was this mere chance? I think not. In the process of evolution the human mind and consciousness came only after man developed the articulation of the thumb which enabled him to grasp objects, thence to use sticks, thence to use tools and acquire skill in dealing with the outer world. Along with this came a shift in the eyes from the side of the head to the front, making possible stereoscopic vision and perception of three dimensions, also the macular areas in the retina which made the images much clearer. Since the mind of the race and of the individual developed and continue to develop out of the combined use of eye and hand, intellectuals must respect manual work. Handicraft develops great delicacy, keenness of discrimination and subtlety of all the senses—of sight, hearing, smell, touch, articular sense, kinesthetic sense, balance, and in some of the crafts also the senses of taste and temperature. It is not by accident that the deepest and most important part of the life of man, his religion, his metaphysics, his absolute assumptions, his cultural axioms, are made vivid and understandable in the analogies of sense experience. In various religious rituals we use specific forms of architecture, images, pictures, symbols, recitals, chants, music, fire, incense, gesture, posture, dance, food, drink, laying on of hands—thus appealing to all the bodily senses. Even the spiritual experience of *Samādhi* of *Fanā* and *Baqā*, the soul's loss of its selfhood and union with God, are described to us by the mystics by analogies and symbols of light, fire, sexual union, voices, walking—all of them sensory experiences. Since the manual workers have done so much to enhance the delicacy, meaning and power of sensory perception, we may say without exaggeration that the Brahman, the Pir, the seer, the saint, and the metaphysician in the very heart and essence of their special functions are dependent upon the manual worker for their subtlety, richness, and depth of understanding. Kabir was a weaver, Dadu a cotton carder, Jesus a carpenter, St. Paul a tentmaker, Boehme a shoe maker.

Manual work makes a similar contribution to all the other occupations and castes. Indeed no culture or civilization can develop or maintain keen discrimination, subtlety, richness and profundity of thought and consciousness without a broad, secure, constant element of handwork. There can be no great culture unless it has profound and clear metaphysics. This, I believe, requires a long and continuing experience of handwork by most of the people of that culture. If you object that there is still manual work in machine civilization, I would answer yes, but the total amount and proportion of handwork there is much less than in the simpler cultures, and furthermore, the amount and proportion of skilled and fine handwork in the machine civilization is very much smaller than in the older cultures. Most of the handwork in machine civilization is rough and unskilled.

For these reasons, if the leaders and intellectuals of any civilization care for the intellectual and moral future of their culture, they must take care that there shall always be large numbers of skilled craftsmen. The intellectuals and the leaders must support craftsmanship by deliberately buying and using a large amount of hand-made goods of many sorts. That means limiting the amount of machine made goods that they will buy, so far as it is economically possible for them. It means that they should also call for fine quality in all hand-made goods. Indeed, they would be wise to learn and regularly practise some manual skill themselves, to increase and maintain their mental poise, discrimination, power and sense of reality.

For such reasons as the foregoing I believe that skilled handicrafts in India at this day

are not only valid and sound, they are essential for the survival, maintenance and development of Indian culture, Hindu and Moslem and all other groups. I only hope that the tide of industrialism in India will go no further ; that craftsman and peasant will survive with vigour until the final crash of Western civilization, so that there may be a revival in India of her great culture on its sound metaphysical basis.

Those who are obsessed with the excitement of industrialism may say that these estimates and interpretations show that I am a sentimental, reactionary fool, oblivious to the advances made by industrialism, wishing vainly that man would retreat into renewed dark ages. I am content to let the next twenty-five years test the truth of my beliefs.

If anyone remarks that many of these ideas have been preached in India for some twenty-five years, I would freely admit the fact. Gandhi has worked for the revival of handcrafts for the sake of the peasants. That is deeply wise. I would only add that handcrafts are necessary for the survival of all occupations and all castes, for the survival of any culture or civilization. To support handcrafts and peasant life in all health and vigour and with an emphasis on fine quality is a measure of self-defence and self-development for everyone.

# THE TIRANŌKKU: OR "CURTAIN-LOOK"

## A UNIQUE KATHAKALI STAGE CONVENTION†

BY K. BHARATHA IYER

IN recent years widespread interest has been aroused in Indian *Nāṭya*. Of the many forms of *Nāṭya* existing in India, the most remarkable and also the most significant is Kathakali, the pantomimic dance-drama of Kerala or Malabar.<sup>1</sup> It is a traditional art and like all great art is both religious and popular. But its popularity is free from any "subservience to uncultivated taste." In Kathakali we find the dance and drama in a highly developed form. In its conventional language of hand gestures and other stylized movements, we see *abhinaya* in full maturity. This grand technique of *abhinaya*, encyclopaedic in range, constitutes its chief classical trait and remains the fullest embodiment of the canons of the *Nāṭya Śāstra*. The *Kūṭiyāttom* (Sanskrit drama of Kerala) and the Kathakali are our chief sources to-day to reconstruct the Sanskrit drama which is practically non-existent outside Kerala. Nevertheless, Kathakali is in tone and temper far removed from it. Its many important departures from the Sanskrit stage form a body of conventions, a close study of which would prove very valuable in understanding the significant traditions that governed the pre-Āryan or non-Āryan theatre of South India.<sup>2</sup> The most noticeable of such departures and one that hits the eye as it were, is the extraordinary make-up; the symbolic facial painting, the fantastic garments and ornaments which eliminate all semblance of the human and transform the actors into gods and demons. Apart from this, there are other significant stage conventions<sup>3</sup> that emphasise this basic difference in tone and temperament. They are unique features of the play that lift it as it were, beyond the laws of drama and convert them into extraordinary spectacles of great cosmic events. The subject of the present study is one such important Kathakali stage practice called *Tiranōkku* (literally, the "curtain-look"). This

† From the author's book, *Kathakali—The Sacred Dance—Drama of Malabar*, shortly to be published by Luzac & Co.

<sup>1</sup> In Kerala the theatrical arts have flourished for nearly two thousand years in almost unbroken continuity. The dance and drama have remained associated with temples as sacred votive offerings loved by the gods. An artist caste was created to ensure the continuity and development of the theatrical arts. Temple lands were bestowed as permanent gifts on these artists; besides they are entitled to rations issued daily from the temples. In this way they are kept beyond want. In return, they are called upon to perform in the temple theatre on specific occasions. Throughout the many centuries the theatre remained a pleasant pre-occupation of the Brahmins and princes of Kerala.

<sup>2</sup> The *Cilappadhikāram*, a Tamil classic, whose date is assigned to 2nd cen. A.D., refers to many types of dances and dance-dramas prevailing in South India at the time. The story of the poem moves against the background of an accomplished danseuse's skill in dancing. Invited to dance at the marriage festivities of Kovilan and Kannakai, son and daughter of two merchant princes, she demands no fee in gold or silver but only the privilege of claiming as her man the one around whose neck the necklace she flings at the conclusion of the dance falls. The merchant princes agree. It so happened that the necklace fell around the neck of the bridegroom and he was, true to word, surrendered. From this sequel the story mounts to a tragic climax. The story is high testimony to the supreme place held by the dance art in the life of the people of the South. The Dancing Lord of Tillai (Natarāja) is the climax of this deep passion of the people!

<sup>3</sup> The elaborate scenes of challenge and battle, the *niṣam* (Blood-display) and the leisurely unfolding love scenes called *paṭinjāttom* are some of the distinct conventions seen in the technique of staging. The Kathakali is performed as a sacred, serious rite. It is an all-night function and is performed in the open.



intensely dramatic and spectacular scene is the ceremonious manner in which certain types of characters of the drama (the *Katti*, *Kari* and *Tāti*)<sup>4</sup> generally the aggressive, fierce ones and those possessed of enormous physical strength, are introduced on their first appearance during the performance. But it is an introduction that portrays vividly the physical emotional and intellectual qualities of the type.

The drumming that presages the entry of such a type, is violent and tempestuous: we are galvanized into a sense of acute expectancy. And, engulfed in ceaseless stirring rhythms which penetrate our inmost being, we are soon awake, with one-pointed attention, in a dream-world where every moment is pregnant with the strangest of possibilities. What is unfolding is a drama within the drama. Rapid and heavy steps behind the curtain in keeping with the tempo of the drums announce the intricate movements of a spirited earth-shaking dance. The impression is created of a giant energy gathering momentum and struggling to overwhelm opposing forces. An occasional weird cry, may be an angry growl, a thunder-like rumbling or an intermissive shriek<sup>5</sup> rises over the hellish din of the drums. The curtain held up (by two men) is ruffled violently as the surface of a wind-lashed sea. All that we see are fleeting glimpses of the shining top of the head-gear of the whirling figure within. After a few minutes of this seismic activity, a beautifully coloured canopy is held over close to the rim of the curtain to look like a picturesque pavilion. We are soon to witness the appearance of Rāvana, the august demon king (according to legends possessed of ten heads and twenty arms) of invincible strength, destroyer of the pride of the *Devas*, now on a spectacular march to subjugate Kubera the lord of wealth. The generously fed oil-lamp raises its twin tongues of flame; they are now riotous, now fitful and positively in a raging temper. Two palms suddenly grip the top of the curtain; the long silver nails of the fingers gleam, quiver and fly over its rim. The gripping, clutching, hands lower it a little by degrees. The hands in their grip hold the lotus-ends of the scarves worn by Rāvana (not yet in view). Now the enormous and scintillating head-dress slowly comes into view; almost half of it emerges over the curtain when a rumbling growl emitted by the demon king and a flourish of drums intensify the tension. The grip on the curtain is then suddenly released; it resumes its former position, completely screening off the figure. The animated steps and movements continue behind the curtain in greater vehemence; the very ground underneath is shaken with tremors. After a few minutes the silver-nailed fingers grip the curtain again and then lower it while the drums pound faster; the curtain quivers as if in extreme excitement. It is lowered, lowered still more this time, but only to give another graduated view; perhaps a fuller view of the magnificently crowned head. These touch-and-go reach and reach-me-not attempts, repeated three or four times, raise expectancy to an acute pitch. The gripping palms appear once again over the curtain holding the trembling, quivering, lotus-ends. Slowly, too slowly, it is lowered when the drums in a final out-pouring release a tempest of sound. The curtain is convulsed in extreme agitation, the flames of the lamp leap and riot in greater violence; the two torches held close to the lamp (the

<sup>4</sup> The characters of the Kathakali drama are not 'individuals' but represent idealised principles of good and evil. Therefore they are divided into five principal categories, *Pacca* (green), *Katti* (knife), *Kari* (black) *Minukku* (polished), and *Tāti* (beard), based on the principle of the *gunas* (qualities) such as *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and their varying combinations. The pattern of the plastic mask and the colour scheme differ in each category and these colours are symbolic and represent *gunas*.

<sup>5</sup> The *Katti*, *Kari* and *Tāti* characters emit certain sounds or cries which vary in volume, pitch and tone; these sounds are indicative of moods, such as anger, love, contempt, fury, hatred, etc. By modulation of voice these cries acquire capacity to vividly express these moods. This is one of the important aspects of Kathakali *Sātvikābhinaya* designed to enrich the total effect in the delineation of moods and sentiments.

curtain is also held very near the lamp) fed with resin powder rage with ever-growing fury. The sphere of light is intense. The sound of the conch swells in a crescendo. Cries imperious and dominant ring like a challenge to the worlds. We are witnessing a violent cosmic event! Is it the first out-burst of a monsoon thunderstorm over the last days of summer, so familiar a scene in Kerala? The enormous head-gear is at last fully revealed: even the colourful curtain pales before its radiant splendour. And then, when the audience is fairly bursting with expectation, the face of Rāvana comes into view by degrees, a strange unearthly one, but fascinating in the clever combination of the colours and in the disposition of the knobs (one on the tip of the nose and another on the forehead): a very majestic and powerful figure beneath the picturesque canopy and flanked on either side by large pea-cock fans, emblems of royalty [See plate XXVIII]. The curtain is half lowered and Rāvana is visible only from his waist upwards. He looks across the flames a strange apparition, a visitor from a super-world. The flaming red eyes, the snouty nose, the intermissive cries, the looks at first steady and then sweeping and challenging the quarters, the repeated pulls at the curtain which agitates violently, the cold and intense stare at the flames (of the lamp and the torches) the violent blowings at them with the gripped curtain, the imperious and stately movements, all these put us into a strange, tense mood. A fury greater than the one expressed by the flames of the lamp and the torches is embodied in this very imperious person. The curtain is let off after a few more pulls hither and thither as if Rāvana is fighting against mighty forces and emerges victorious.

The scene is one that detaches itself from the ordinary range of emotions. What is progressing on the stage looks a violent, cosmic activity (an idealised presentation of it); perhaps an unleashed storm with many unknown terrors. This is no impersonation but an embodiment!

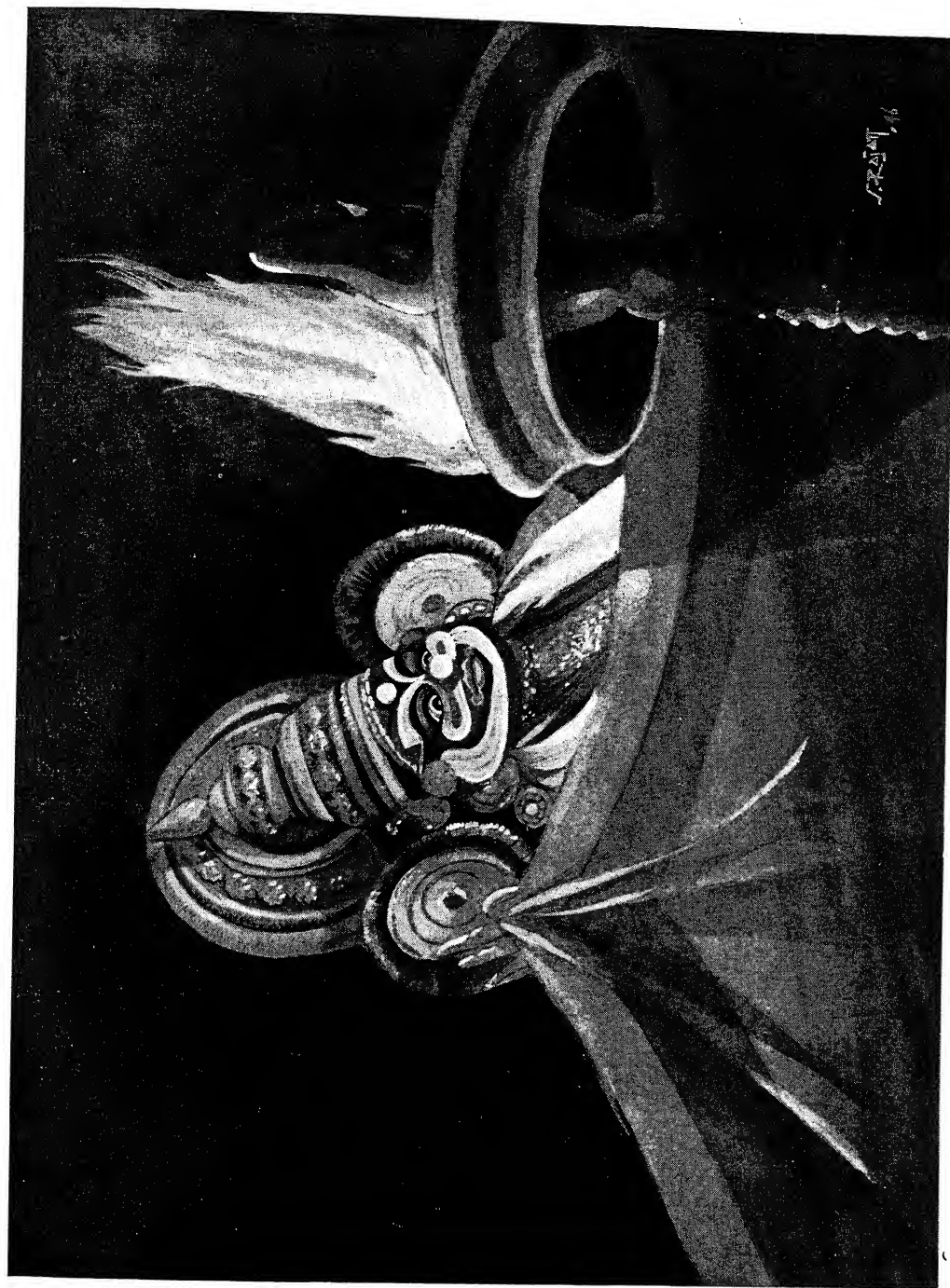
The portrayal is so powerful that we fail to notice the little incongruities on the stage; the two boys holding the curtain obliged to adjust themselves to keep pace with the restless movements of Rāvana, the two torch-bearers in front and bearers of pea-cock fans crouching and hiding awkwardly behind the billowing skirt of the demon king. We just don't take notice of all these: we are only conscious of the dominating figure in front of us whose every little move engrosses and thrills us. We are taken steadily to the crest of a great emotional wave where we are sustained and then brought down gently by the subsequent action of the character. What we get is an exceptionally vivid and living impression of the form, personality and character of Rāvana, more intimate in certain respects than literary descriptions of him. Qualities and passions that form the very warp and woof of the story are thus concretized into unforgettable, haunting visions.

*Tiranōkku* requires special adjustments to suit particular characters and specific situations.<sup>6</sup> The *tiranōkku* of Rāvana in another play *Ravanōdbhava* (Nativity of Ravana) differs from the one described above in details. The *tiranōkku* of Śisupāla—a highly proud and aggressive monarch who was singled out and insulted by not being invited to the *Rājasūya* ceremony held at the court of the Pāndavas (where every king and nobleman

<sup>6</sup> Some of the characters mount a stool or a wooden mortar and then perform the "curtain-look," towering over the squatting audience, successfully creating by this simple device, an even more awe-inspiring impression. In the *tiranōkku* of Hanumān an impression of his reputed *bhakti* is effectively conveyed in the *yogic* pose of devotion and tranquillity so skilfully blended with the more stirring activities designed to suggest his wild and elemental strength and heroic qualities.

was present) while Sri Krishna, his bitter foe, was offered the supreme seat of honour, a place which Śiśupāla himself coveted—is a grand spectacle of power and fury.

The *tīranōkku* puts us into touch with a world of giant forces and passions ; we are inescapably whirled in its currents. Time and space vanish from our cognition and we live intensely in a dream-world. Here is primitive strength passionately impelled and seeking expression of the spirit in an idiom alien to the Sanskrit stage.



TIRANOKKU (CURTAIN LOOK) OF RAVANA

# THE MAGIC BALL AND THE GOLDEN FRUIT IN ANCIENT CHINESE ART

BY DR. ALFRED SALMONY (U.S.A.)

THE globe-like symbols that appear near or on living beings on many art objects have been the subject of numerous studies. Most Western writers emphasize their world-wide distribution and use them to support theories of migrations and influences. Inter-relation of some kind cannot be denied when similar or identical motives appear in different countries and at vastly different times. However, this does not mean that such motives were always handed down in effigie. Sometimes the inter-relation may have been literary rather than visual. A story teller could draw from the all-present and inexhaustible well of traditional myths, while the image-maker never saw the form which a far-away predecessor had chosen to materialize from a tale into an object of propitious or protective value.

It is for this reason that I feel justified in neglecting problems of ultimate derivation. A last analysis may even lead back to the oldest art-producing man (Marc R. Sauter, "Essai sur l'histoire de la perle à ailette," *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Urgeschichte*, vol. XXXV, Frauenfeld, 1945). Such a theory would place the double-breast beads of the Moravian Palaeolithic at the beginning of the sequence of the globe-like symbols. It would then lead to the wide-spread neolithic pendant in the form of two perforated tusks curving in opposite directions, and would come close to the subject of this study with the double discs of the Bronze Age (Sauter, *op. cit.*, fig. 36).

In limiting my considerations to the Far Eastern branch of globe symbolism, I have been preceded by two recent writers, O Janse, *Le cheval cornu et la boule magique*, Ipek, 1935, Berlin, 1936) and J. Zykan ("Drache und Perle," *Artibus Asiae* VI, 1-2, Leipzig, 1936). By mentioning a pearl story of the Taoist Chuang tse, Zykan traces the literary sources of the motive back to the IVth century B.C. A survey of all subsequent versions in China would be a tremendous undertaking. It would reach from the "golden fruit" held by Bhaishajyaguru (Chinese Yao Shih fo, Japanese Yakushi), the healer Buddha (A. Getty *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Oxford, 1914, p. 23) to the still ubiquitous "pearl of effulgence" between a pair of playfully pursuing dragons. The symbolic fruit in the hand of a divine figure is definitely of Indian origin since all Buddhist attributes used in China came from the homeland of the faith. The same source of inspiration has been suggested for the pre-Buddhist gem (A. Conrady and E. Erkes, *Das älteste Dokument zur chinesischen Kunstgeschichte, T'ien Wen, die Himmelsfragen des K'üeh Yüan*, Leipzig, 1931, p. 169).

This dual aspect of globe-like symbols in China leads to the question of their origin in time. In general it is not easy to distinguish between them. The pearl adheres strictly to a globular, spherical or circular shape, while the fruit shows a tendency to deviate from such symmetrically round forms. I hope to prove that both gem and fruit appear first in the Far East, during the late Eastern Chou period (VIth-IIIrd century B.C.). Both were more or less contemporaries of Chuang tse's text.



The survey of early examples may begin with objects which are particularly characteristic of the period under consideration. They are bronzes, inlaid with gold, silver, or both. The character of their geometric decor makes it possible to establish a group of common origin. Ever since their first publication such objects have been generally accepted as Late Eastern Chou (W. C. White, *Tombs of Old Loyang*, Shanghai, 1934). Graves of the house of Hān near Loyang, covering a period from the middle of the VIth to the IIIrd century B.C., are considered as their provenance. These inlaid bronzes include horizontal pole-ends of peculiar shape (White, *op. cit.*, pl. XXIII, No. 051). They have a socketed squarish block with a spur at one upper corner and, at the lower edge of the same side, an elongated upward curve topped by a bird's head. Set on two parallel poles, these features seem fitted to support a cross beam. On a pair of such pole ends the bird holds a ball-shaped object in its beak (fig. 1, owned by the Heeramanek Galleries, New York: the other one in the H. Hardt Collection, Berlin). This ball looks exactly like the pearl with which T' ang and later birds are so frequently provided, and it seems safe to presume that its significance was similar to that associated with subsequent examples. For those many possibilities have to be considered as William's list of pearl symbols shows (C. A. S. Williams, *Outline of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives*, Shanghai, 1932, p. 137). It comprises: "sun, moon, symbol of thunder rolling, egg emblem of dual influences of nature, the pearl of potentiality, the night-shining pearl." The Late Eastern Chou gem in the bird's beak stands a good chance of referring to a star, because at least one combination of animal and celestial body can be definitely traced to this period.

It occurs on a belt buckle (Collection C. T. Loo, New York). As White has been the first to demonstrate, the credit for the invention or introduction of this object of material culture goes to Late Eastern Chou. The specimen under consideration displays details that fit only in this early time—and style-unit. These are to be found on two tigers, a vertical one whose body forms the lower part of the otherwise plain pole (the hook above is broken off) and an upward curved one that bites through the neck of the first. Both bodies are covered with elongated scales, reminiscent of the preceding Middle Chou, but with several scales closely striated according to Late Eastern Chou fashion. A half-moon, the most obvious of all star images, completes the shield of the buckle. It is held by the mouth of the vertical tiger, just as the pearl (fig. 1) is held by the bird's beak. The number of contemporary objects associating bird's beak and ball-shaped star can be increased by several jades (A. Salmony, *Carved Jade of Ancient China*, Berkeley, 1938, plates XLVII, 8, and LXIII). Paintings illustrating the same subject around 500 A.D. are to be found in the graves of Southern Manchuria (H. Ikeuchi and J. Harada, *T' ung Kou*, vol. II, Tokyo, 1940, plates XXXI and XLVI).

Among the numerous shapes used as belt buckles White mentions slender and elongated ones which tend to merge hook, pole and shield into a shallow S curve (an extreme case, White, *op. cit.*, pl. LVI, No. 135). Since examples with lavish turquoise inlay are again associated with Hān graves near Loyang, another buckle with globe-symbol is easily placed in time (fig. 2, Coll. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington). The open work of its shield represents a monkey standing on an undulating, leaf-topped stem with the head resting on the right shoulder so that it appears in a nearly full-front view. The eyes, like those of the animal head serving as hook, are inlaid with jet-like stones. The right arm of the animal reaches over the stem which passes along its left cheek. This arm clutches a hemispherical turquoise bead, again a globe symbol, changed by the inherent laws of relief rendering from the full-round ball to the reduced three-dimensionality

of the calotte. It is incised with a central circle and radiating whorl lines. In many civilizations undulating or broken lines in or around round forms indicate "the idea of motion" (Goblet d'Alviella, *La migration des symboles*, Paris, 1891, p. 40), always associated with celestial bodies. It is more difficult to explain the combination of monkey and star. Modern Chinese mythology invests the nimble animal with "the general control of hobgoblins, witches, elves, etc." (S. A. S. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 276). Such associations are not too far removed from a seemingly earlier one that made the monkey the swift upholder of the sun, endangered possibly by an eclipse.

Monkey and sun are brought together in different ways during late Eastern Chou. A small belt buckle with shield in the shape of an agitated ape holding a flat ring before its chest has also been attributed to the Loyang finds (White, *op. cit.*, pl. LVIII, No. 142a). The relation between the substance of the ring and its perforation makes it possible to call it a "pi," the well-known symbol of heaven. The fact that its surface carries an all-over granulation between raised edges supports the Late Eastern Chou date. Karlgren dealt with this decor in his classification of early Chinese mirrors. He demonstrated that granulation bands are a particularity of his "C type" from the Ch' u state, secured for the time from circa 550 to 220, and of his "D type" from the Loyang region, attributable to the IVth—IIIrd century B.C. (B. Karlgren, "Huai and Han," *Bulletin Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, No. 13, Stockholm, 1941). A similar bronze buckle (Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo) differs from White's example only in details of the object held by the monkey. This is now a disc with central circle, still a globe-symbol, rendered pictorially, i.e., in two dimensions instead of the three inherent in the full round and relief. A six-pointed star surrounds the circular centre. The granulation supports a date identical to the one from Loyang. More than on fig. 2 the movement of the sun-carrier seems to be motivated by fear such as the Chinese of old expressed at the occasion of an eclipse.

Numerous versions of pictorial, i.e., two-dimensional, renderings of the globe-symbol are known in China. One of them occurs on the gold and silver inlaid blade of a bronze sword (IVth—IIInd century B.C., Coll. C. T. Loo, New York). The whole object has been published and assigned to Late Eastern Chou (J. M. Menzies, *An Exhibition of Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, loaned by C. T. Loo & Co., Detroit, 1940, pl. XXXVIII, No. 57), although the beginning of the following period cannot be ruled out altogether. The illustrated section of this blade shows a feathered bird-man running to the right with one arm reaching back for a disc. At the other side of this object a bird with open beak comes almost close enough to swallow it. A spiral fills the centre. Once more one feels tempted to explain this detail by later versions of globe symbols. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts owns a Korean silver plaque of the XIth—XIIth century with a flaming disc inscribed by a spiral (published by K. Tomita in *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, No. 231, February, 1941). The meanings considered possible in connection with the spiral circle of the Korean object were: "the precious pearl, the moon, the sun, the thunder, the dual emblem of nature, the concrete essence of the moon." The experience gained from the ape-buckles seems to favour a sun-significance.

The bird snapping at and thus menacing the sun disc is also illustrated on a gold inlaid bronze tube in the Tokyo school of Art (*Relics of Han and Pre-Han Dynasties*, Catalogue of an Exhibition, Tokyo, May, 1932, pl. L), most likely of early Han date.

All celestial bodies are suggestive of light, and one may expect to find this quality duly emphasized. The Heavenly Questions, the source for the understanding of so many Late Eastern Chou and Han subjects, speaks of the Jewel "illuminating the night,"

or "brightening the night" (Conrady-Erkes, *op. cit.*, p. 168). Later Chinese folklore endows the dragon with a luminous pearl on its head. With little change in position, the star as a light fitting on an animal body can be traced back to the time when the Heavenly Questions originated. I once published a striking example without mentioning its globe-symbolism (A. Salmony, *Carved Jade of Ancient China*, Berkeley, 1938, pl. LXVI.) I use the occasion to change its Hān attribution to one of the preceding period). It is a jade pendant based on the flattened shape of an archer's ring, surrounded by animals. Along the right edge strides a tiger carrying a conspicuous globular object on the centre of its back which I now suggest be considered as an illuminating jewel.

Like so many symbols of early China this one too affected the Eurasian steppe inhabitants. Its adaptation belongs to the famous find of Pazirik in the Altai mountains (accessible in English through the report of its excavator, M. P. Griaznov, "The Pazirik Burial of Altai," *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. XXXVII, No. 1, January-March, 1933). The most outstanding feature of this discovery are ten horses with their felt saddle covers decorated with figurative applique work. On one of them the usual animal combat is replaced by a single beast (fig. 3, after a drawing by S. Teplouchoff, original now in the Hermitage, Leningrad). It represents a feline, most likely derived from a Western lion, which the nomad artist knew from foreign models without having ever seen a living specimen. As a consequence he did not hesitate to endow the image with enormous ears. Once more the excrescence of the back close to the fore-shoulder in difference to the jade just mentioned must be understood as a brightening jewel. Considering the artistic interrelation between the Chinese jade and the nomadic felt cover, the date of the latter deserves special attention. Griaznov, who maintained a non-committal attitude towards this problem in his first publication, decided finally on the IVth-IIIrd century B.C. (M. P. Griaznov, *Le Kourgane de Pazyryk*, Moscow, 1937, p. 41). As long as no detailed monography can be consulted one may hesitate between his attribution and an early Hān one.

While I have been able to quote or illustrate numerous star and jewel symbols of Late Eastern Chou China the survey of contemporary fruit globes is for the time being limited to two.

One example leads back to the much discussed belt-buckles (fig. 4, Collection Freer Gallery of Art, Washington). The open work of its shield is not easily deciphered because its lower section is lost. The remainder shows only the hind part of a feline in bird's eye view with legs wide apart, the tail undulating and reaching the pole and claws gripping the leafy frame which overlaps part of the tail. The frame secures the late Eastern Chou origin by its granulation. The decoration of the pole is limited to three encircling bands near the shield. A feline head, a playful variation of the once ubiquitous tiger serves as hook. This head carries a barrel-shaped object in its mouth, divided by grooves into three sections. No star could be meant by such a figure, while a melon-like fruit lends itself easily to a grooved representation.

The other slightly assymetrical globe, equally large in relation to its carrier, occurs on a horizontal pole-top (fig. 5, Collection E. Erickson, New York). The usage needs some explanation since the object was at first placed vertically, a position erroneously given to numerous pole ends until rectified by the present writer (A. Salmony, *Der wagerechte Stangenabschluss an der nordchinesischen Grenze und in China*, Seminarium Kondakovianum VI, Prague, 1933. This article includes a specimen, pl. VI, 6, combining two lions so similar to fig. 5 that both objects must come from the same hand and be of the

PLATE XXIX

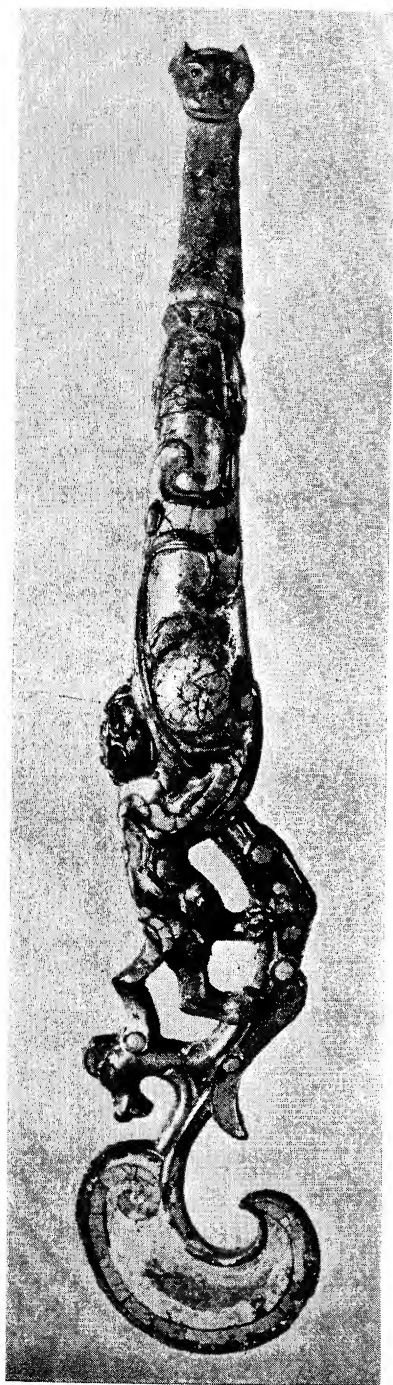


FIG. 2—BELT-BUCKLE, GILT BRONZE  
WITH TURQUOISE AND OTHER INLAY,  
LENGTH,  $8\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
CHINA, VITH-IIIIRD CENTURIES B.C.  
Collection, Freer, Gallery of Art,  
Washington.

FIG. 4—BELT-BUCKLE,  
BRONZE, LENGTH  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
CHINA, VITH-IIIIRD  
CENTURIES B.C.  
Collection, Freer  
Gallery of Art,  
Washington

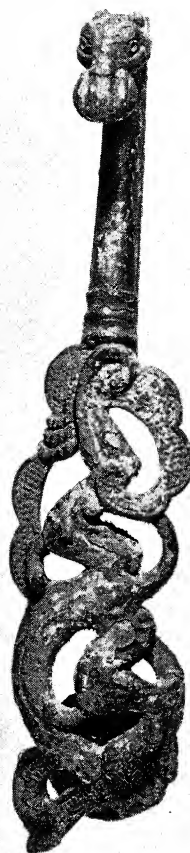


FIG. 3—SADDLE-COVER, FELT WITH APPLIQUE WORK.  
DRAWING S. TEPLOUCHOFF. PAZIRIK FIND, ALTAI,  
IVTH-IIIIRD CENTURIES B.C. Hermitage Leningrad.

PLATE XXX

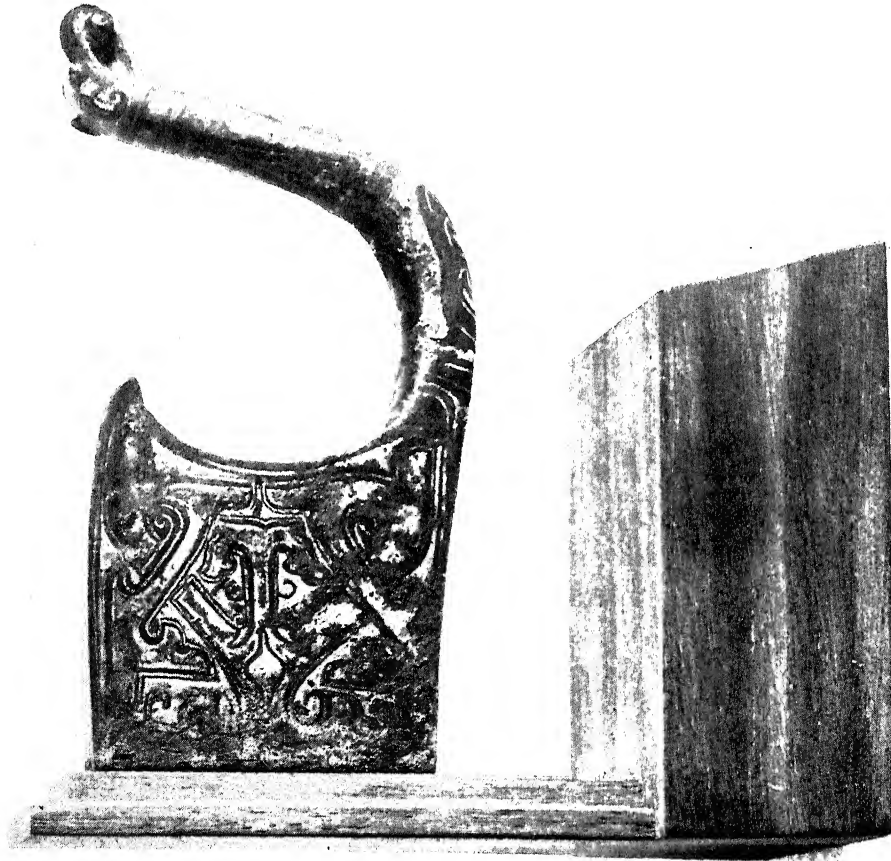


FIG. 1—POLE END, BRONZE WITH GOLD AND SILVER INLAY,  $4\frac{5}{8}$ "  
CHINA VITH-IIIIRD CENTURIES B.C.  
Collection Heeramanek Galleries, New York.

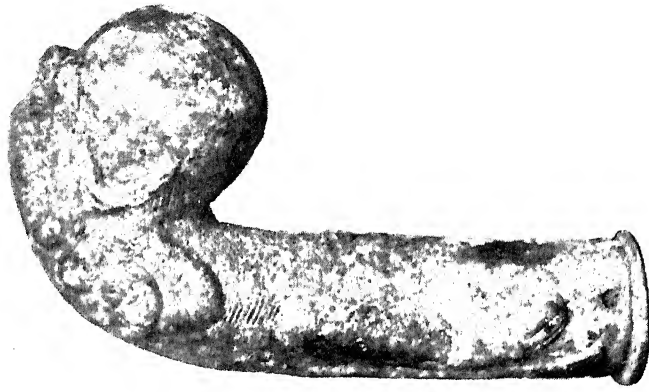


FIG. 5—HORIZONTAL POLE-END, BRONZE,  
LENGTH  $5\frac{1}{4}$ "  
CHINA, VITH-IIIIRD CENTURIES B.C.  
Collection, E. Erickson, New York



#### THE MAGIC BALL AND THE GOLDEN FRUIT

same date). Quality and colour of the bronze, the striation of the fur and analogy of some details with those of other objects justify a Late Eastern Chou attribution, somewhat toward the end of the period. The upper part of the tube shows a lion with heavy mane, one of the many instances where the Western feline entered the Chinese pantheon. The beast is stretched out as if in flying gallop. The head drops with the mouth biting an enormous globule which is longer than it is wide, consequently a fruit. The violent action and the tension of the body indicates that the consumption of the symbolic nutriment should appear as highly beneficial or desirable. Later on, when the myth evolves from the sublime to the vulgar, *haritaki*, the Indian fruit, held by Bhaishajyaguru, becomes renowned as a laxative (L. Scherman "Buddha in Fürstenschmuck," *Abhandlungen der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1931, München, 1932, p. 5).

The globe-like symbols, discussed in this study, indicate a departure from the cosmological mythology of Shang, Early Western Chou and Middle Chou. They signify a shift from the illustration of over-powering natural forces to that of fairy tales told with confidence and ease. This Late Eastern Chou state of mind has no antecedents in China. The arts of early India are as yet insufficiently known to establish the continent between the Indus and Ganges as the centre from which the star-jewel, the sun-ball, the light-fixture and the nutrimental fruit originated, without referring to literary sources and to later art manifestations. The probability of South Western Asia as their homeland is, however, supported by the fact that other Indian motives occur in China at the time that the globe-like symbols make their first appearance. I mention only the gardua-bird, to which other images may be added in due time.

## THE NEDZU HO

### CHINESE RITUAL BRONZE VESSELS OF THE HO TYPE

BY MISS FLORENCE WATERBURY (U.S.A.)

THE three magnificent Chinese bronze ritual vessels of the type Ho, formerly owned by the late Kaichiro Nedzu and now the property of the Japanese nation, are ascribed to the Shang period and are said to have been found at An-yang. However, they were not scientifically excavated by the Academia Sinica, and a certain nebulosity hovers around their discovery. Mr. Palmgren makes this statement on the subject :

"The three Nedzu Bronzes belong, as stated, to one set. When, on my return to China, I followed up their traces, I was able to establish that they came from Chang T'e Fu, An Yang. They belonged all three to the same large grave-chamber, and were arranged in a row, side by side."

(Translated from *Yinstil-Studien*, p. 87; *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, 1936.)

The informants of the late M. Pelliot were more specific as to site, and less so as to association. M. Pelliot writes :

"We can give full confidence to the opinion that some of the bronzes not found by the members of the Academia Sinica also come from An-yang. That is the case, for instance, with a group of three bronzes which were acquired a short time ago by a well-known Japanese collector, Mr. Nedzu. . . . From the first they have been said to come from Hou-chia-chuang, and I think we may accept that attribution."

and further on he says.

"It is not certain, though I think probable, that the Nedzu bronzes all came from one tomb."

(The Royal Tombs of An-yang, pp. 56-57, *Studies in Chinese Art and Some Indian Influences*, 1938.)

Mr. Palmgren states as certainties what M. Pelliot gives as probabilities, but their conclusions practically coincide. Mr. Palmgren, who examined the Ho in Japan, gives a detailed description of the patina ; the metal is, he says,

"overlaid by a proto-oxidized layer, which here and there shows dark copper-red flecks. This layer is itself covered by a blue-green malachite layer, which in places is very thin, forming the so-called 'water-patinated' smooth surfaces, and in other places shows thick, dry crusts, with occasionally small protuberances. This patina sometimes turns into thin patches of blue lazurite, which usually overlay malachite."

(Palmgren, *op. cit.*, p. 88.)

There seems to be no doubt that the three Ho form a set. The form and the style of the vessels are very distinctive and quite different in several ways from those of other Ho so far discovered. Each vessel is inscribed with a single character in the Shang hieratic script ; these signify respectively, "Right," "Centre," and "Left." Mr. Palmgren

### THE NEDZU HO

designates the vessels correspondingly as Ho I, II and III. The vessels are tall; the tallest being 740 mm. (fig. 1). The form of the Ho and the shape of the legs are unusual, but the most extraordinary feature is the top, which is not a lid, but an immovable cover, cast in one piece with the Ho, and having an orifice through which water or wine could be poured into the vessel. From this cover the spout rises, and while all the spouts of Ho rise sharply, the spouts of the Nedzu Ho soar upward at such an extraordinary angle that pouring from the vessel must have been a difficult proceeding. The form is unique among Shang ritual bronzes.

A sentence in Mr. Palmgren's summing-up is suggestive:

"As the Min style comes before us in these splendid bronzes of the Nedzu collection, it is indeed a heavy, archaic style, somewhat overelaborate and restless, but at the same time vigorous and rich."  
(*Op. cit.*, p. 99.)

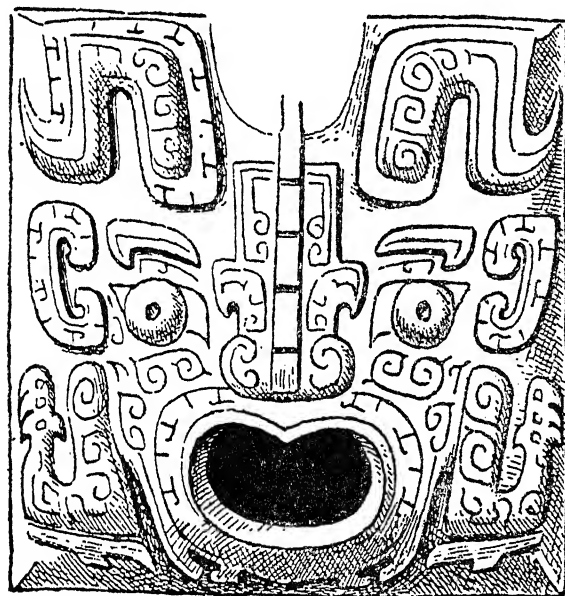


FIG. 4—COVER OF HO III

*Reproduced from Palmgren, op. cit., Plate 27*

This description would not apply to the subtle and finely restrained style of many bronzes and marble sculptures found at An-yang, but it is an accurate description of the style of many fine Early Western Chou vessels. An analysis of the Nedzu Ho has led the writer to think that these vessels, made by Shang workmen in the late Shang period, represent not a Shang, but an Early Chou style.

As is well known, the Shang people in making bronzes often used shapes which originated in the pottery of the neolithic Black Pottery people, with whom they also had architectural associations. The shape of the three Ho is not found in the black pottery, but it appears in the prehistoric pottery of Kansu. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate pottery vessels found by Dr. Andersson in Lanchow (Andersson, *Prehistory of the Chinese*, pl. 37, fig. 4; pl. 38; BMFEA, No. 15). Dr. Andersson places these vessels in the Ch'i Chia Ping stage, which pre-dates Yang Shao. These very early ewers have the immovable cover, with the sharply rising spout, and the orifice, which is kidney-shaped. It is to be

noted that although on the Nedzu covers the openings have become the mouths of the Tiger-heads, yet the original shape remains, particularly in the case of Ho III, whose cover is illustrated in fig. 4. The Ch'i Chia Ping ewers have no legs; the Nedzu bronzes follow the Shang Ho in having legs. It is a curious fact that the Chou did not seem to like vessels with legs; under their rule the Chüeh and the Chia disappear, and the predominating types of vessels in Chou, the Yu, Kuei, Kuang and Tsun, are all types with solid fairly large bases. So far as one can judge from photographs the spouts of the Ch'i Chia Ping ewers rise at an angle very similar to that of the spouts on the Ho.

The writer knows of only one other example of a bronze vessel with the immovable cover; this is a Ho formerly in the German State Museum, Berlin (fig. 5). This hybrid vessel is a combination of two pre-historic pottery-forms; the Li which originated in Eastern China, and the ewer from Ch'i Chia Ping in North-western China. The Li ultimately travelled as far west as Kansu. Some of the Kansu Li of the Ssu Wa period have legs which are similar in "action" to those of the Berlin Ho (Andersson, *op. cit.*, pl. 174, I.). The Ch'i Chia Ping ewer apparently came only as far east as Honan. The soaring spout of the Berlin Ho differs from those of the ewers and the Nedzu Ho in being somewhat funnel-shaped; on the other hand, its handle rises from the edge of the rim of the cover, like those of the ewers, while the handles of the Nedzu Ho are placed considerably below the rim. The two pottery-forms of the Berlin Ho are joined by a band decorated with a design derived from Shang ritual bronzes. The orifice here is also kidney-shaped.

The Nedzu Ho also differ from Shang bronzes in the treatment of the head on the cover. Here each cover has a single Tiger's head, looking upward, with the mouth open, as though screaming. There is a great difference in the details of these heads; the eyes, brows, ears, feet, horns, and decor all vary. One other case of a solitary face looking upward on the cover of a vessel is known to the writer. This is an extraordinary bronze, also a Ho, in the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C. (fig. 6). The entire cover is a human face of primitive type, wearing capped horns, and gazing upward. The cover is removable; the strange vessel has no legs, and no handle, though the spout is present. The Berlin Ho has been ascribed to the Chou period; the Freer Ho, in the writer's opinion, is also of that period.

On some of the Kansu pottery two symbols are found: a circle enclosing a cross; and a cross with four dots between the arms. Both appear on Chou bronzes. A combination of these pre-historic symbols may be seen on Nedzu Ho III, where a circle enclosing a cross made of five dots occurs three times on each side of the spout (fig. 7). This circle also suggests a relationship with another symbol from Kansu, where, on a pottery-fragment from the Huai Tsui site, there is a raised disc with seven dots (Andersson, *op. cit.*, pl. 124, fig. 3).

Besides these elements from the pre-historic pottery of Kansu—the form and the round symbols—there are more factors which differentiate these Ho from other vessels of Shang. They form a set of three; they are inscribed with characters which do not signify dedication, offerings, or sacrifice, etc., but which refer merely to position. The writer knows of no other set of three similar ritual vessels so inscribed. There are also stylistic differences; the silhouettes are broken in line, not suave; the bronzes have a quality of aggressive, dynamic vitality, startling as the scream of a parrot; a quality typical of many splendid Early Western Chou bronzes, but not characteristic of Shang. There is also the extension of the flanges—later on carried to such a striking extent in



*Reproduced by permission of A. C. Cooper & Son, London*

FIG. I—NEDZU HO I  
INSCRIBED "RIGHT"

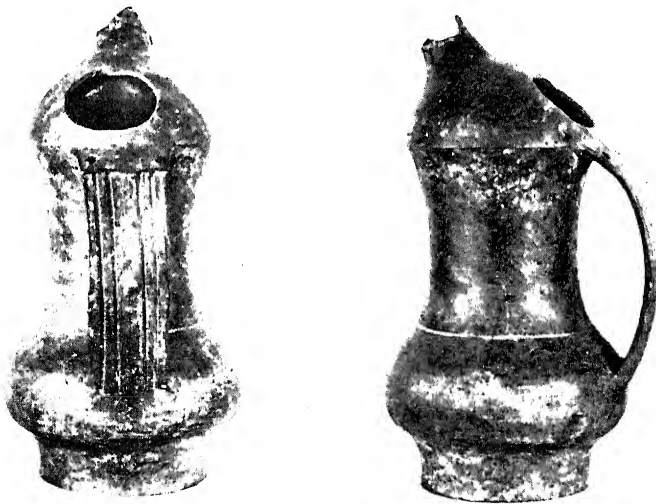




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*Reproduced from Andersson, op. cit., Plate 37, No. 4*

FIG. 2—EWER FROM CH'I CHIA P'ING, KANSU



The Ch'i Chia P'ing ewer. Kansu. 1/2.

*Reproduced from Andersson, op. cit., Plate 38*

FIG. 3—TWO VIEWS OF EWER FROM CH'I CHIA P'ING, KANSU



FIG. 5—Ho

FORMERLY IN GERMAN STATE MUSEUM, BERLIN

PLATE XXXIV



FIG. 6—Ho

Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Chou ; the treatment of the bodies and tails of the Birds (fig. 1) ; and particularly that of the very unusual beak of the large Bird on the handle of Ho III (Palmgren, *op. cit.*, pl. 18, p. 88 ; and fig. 33, p. 97). Though this Bird wears Rams' horns, like the Owls, its eye is not an Owl's eye, and its great beak with the exaggerated curve is quite different from the beaks of Shang Owls.

Other unusual features are the rows of vertically placed Tigers (fig. 1) on Ho I and II, which become Cicadas on Ho III ; the types of the small Tiger-heads on the sides of the vessels (Palmgren, *op. cit.*, figs. 34, 35, 36, p. 97) ; the emphasis on nostrils of the large Tiger-heads on the legs ; the position of the one-winged Cicadas below the Tiger's jaws. On the handle of Ho II, the Tiger rests on a fish-like creature of which the writer knows no counterpart in Shang. (Palmgren, *op. cit.*, fig. 32, p. 97.) The great force of the larger forms is combined with a certain disintegrated softness of line in the smaller forms. (Palmgren, *op. cit.*, figs. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, p. 95.)



FIG. 7—CIRCLES ENCLOSING CROSS MADE WITH DOTS ON SPOUT OF HO III

*Reproduced from Palmgren, op. cit., Plate 29*

The Ho also have distinctively Shang elements ; first among these is the very beautiful, fine workmanship ; also the type of the flanges, except for the extensions ; the Shang symbols, such as the Tiger, Cicada and Bird ; the motifs, such as the horns of the Ram and those of the Water-buffalo ; the crooked, and the capped horns of the Bull ; the combination of the crooked horns with the upturned claws of the Tiger ; the Tiger with capped horns and a snake's body (Ho III), found on Shang carved bones, and appearing later with greater frequency on Chou bronzes ; the inscriptions in archaic Shang script.

At Ch'i Chia Ping, all the pottery found was from dwelling-sites ; no cemeteries were discovered. (Andersson, *op. cit.*, p. 78.) The original ewers were therefore secular vessels, whose forms may have been continued for many generations, and among those using them there may have been the ancestors of the Chou people.

Concerning the little-known early history of the Chou, Se-ma-ts'ien says that the ancestor of the Chou, Ki, was the son of a princess of a province in Shen-si, and a supernatural father. From the first there is an association with agriculture ; indeed, Mr.

Creel considers Ki to be an agricultural diety (Creel, *Birth of China*, p. 225). The tradition is that the Chou moved always southward, till they reached the "plain of Chou." Wên, the father of Wu, conqueror of Shang, is mentioned as having fought against a city of Kansu, Mi-siu (Se-ma-tis'ien, vol. 2, *Les Tcheou*, p. 220).

Mr. Creel has made some important and illuminating statements concerning the Chou and their relations with the Shang people :

" Apparently the Chou were originally of the same fundamental North Chinese Neolithic stock as that from which the Shangs seem to have sprung. . . . We do know that while they had domestic animals they were fundamentally an agricultural people. Their language was probably very closely related to that of the Shangs, for they found it possible to use the Shang system of writing with very little alteration of vocabulary, grammar, or phraseology." (Creel, *op. cit.*, p. 221.)

Mr. Creel says, however, that the fact that the brothers of the Shang rulers inherited the throne before the sons, while with the Chou the heirs were the eldest sons of the principal wives, means "a fundamental difference of social organization. It shows beyond question that the Chou and Shang peoples, while similar in many respects, were products of two distinct lines of cultural evolution, with long, separate histories " (*op. cit.*, p. 222).

The strange form of the Nedzu Ho, and the round symbol, may offer a clue to the Chou people's long, separate history.

As to the probability of the Chou chieftains being able to acquire ritual bronzes before the conquest of Shang, we may turn to Mr. Creel again :

" The contact of the Chous with Shang culture came before, not after, the conquest." (*Op. cit.*, p. 222.)

It seems most probable that the contact took place not only before the conquest, but long before. Jin, the grandmother of Wu, the conqueror, was a princess of Che in Shang. The fact that she married a Chou chieftain implies that there was already contact between Chou and Shang, perhaps of long-standing. In a previous work the writer has already expressed the belief that during the three generations of Jin, Wen, and Wu, the relations between Chou and Shang were continuous and intensive (*Early Chinese Symbols and Literature : Vestiges and Speculations*, p. 18). The Chou could not fail to be profoundly impressed by one of the most brilliant cultures of the world ; as an agricultural people, they would be predisposed towards the religion of Shang. It is the writer's opinion that many of the sons of Chou leaders were educated in the Shang capital ; the Chou could not have so completely adopted the pattern of Shang life without a previous familiarity with the design. When Wu, immediately after the conquest, releases the Count of Khi from prison and employs him " to restore to their places the officers who were acquainted with the ceremonial usages of Shang," he shows a reverence for those ceremonies, neglected by the last Shang ruler, which could only have been held by one who knew, believed in and practised them. Wu " overturned the existing rule of Shang, and made the government resume its old course " (*Shu King*, V, III, 3).

It is possible that the Early Chou style may have begun in late Shang due to this same last ruler, the impious Shau, who, his own Grand Master says, " has no reverence for things he ought to reverence, but does despite to the venerable aged, the men who have long been in office. The people of Yin will now steal even the pure and perfect victims



THE NEDZU HO

devoted to the spirits of heaven and earth, and their conduct is connived at, and though they proceed to eat the victims, there is no punishment " (*Shu King*, IV, XI, 2).

And Wu, addressing the assembly and the troops before the attack on Shang, says that, "Shau has no repentant heart. He sits squatting on his heels, not serving God nor the spirits of heaven and earth, neglecting also the temple of his ancestors, and not sacrificing in it." "He says that sacrifice is of no use" (*Shu King*, V, I, 1; and V, I, 2).

The fact that Shau scorned and discontinued the sacrifices to heaven, earth, and the ancestral spirits may be significant for the Nedzu bronzes. Such a state of mind could have made the Shang king willing to allow the Chou chieftains to acquire ritual bronzes made by the hieratic artisans—probably at the cost of a large gift to Shau himself. During the long reign of Shau many such vessels could have been made. It is not impossible that, just as the Japanese many centuries later produced some of their finest works of art under the tremendous impact of their first contact with Chinese culture, so some of the most splendid Early Chou vessels, such as the Nedzu Ho, could have been made before the conquest, particularly during the vivid last century of Shang.

## A PERENNIAL PUZZLE:

### THE MOTIVE OF THREE FISH WITH A COMMON HEAD

BY DR. CARL SCHUSTER (U.S.A.)

**A**MONG the motives which have appealed to the popular imagination in many lands that of three fish with a single head is one of the most curious. This motive may be classed as a puzzle-picture, of the kind which is passed on by those who know it to the mystification and amusement of those who do not. Once seen, it is not easily forgotten; and this memorable quality no doubt accounts for the fact that, like many tricks and games, it has an enormous distribution in time and space.

The purpose of the present article is to call attention to the occurrence of this motive in modern China, and to bring hitherto unpublished Chinese examples of it into relation with better known examples from Asia, Africa and Europe. Whatever other use these comparisons may serve, they will at least help to call attention to some of the many threads connecting the little known folk art of China with a corresponding phase of artistic expression in the cultures of the West.

Fig. 1 represents part of the decoration of a one-page almanac from a village in Szech'uan province, Western China.<sup>1</sup> Of the three compartments into which the rectangular area is divided, that on the left is occupied by our motive of three fish with a common head, each fish supported by a boy, that on the right by another puzzle-picture made up of a group of babies with three heads and six bodies, and that in the centre by an inscription referring to the representations in the two lateral compartments. The inscription may be read "nine sons, all pass the examinations," or "nine sons fully pass the examinations." The reference is to the triennial state examinations, from which candidates were selected for high official positions under the old imperial system. "Passing the examinations" is a stereotype for worldly success. Having "nine sons" is similarly a common figure for domestic bliss. The idea of having nine sons, all of whom achieve official honour, thus represents, in concrete terms, the greatest possible joy compounded with the highest possible honour.

Beyond this, the inscription seems to have a second meaning, referring cryptically to the number of children to be found in the two accompanying puzzle-pictures. This second sense turns upon a certain ambiguity in the third character, which is that for the numeral ten. Though this word seems, on the one hand, to represent a contraction of the phrase *shih ch'üan*, meaning "all," or "fully," in the sense of "100 per cent," the numeral may also be taken in its literal sense, in which case the inscription reads "nine sons, ten pass the examinations." This interpretation suggests the idea of "surpassing perfection," while at the same time it seems to enjoin the reader to seek a tenth child in the accompanying pictures. Now a tenth child is not to be found in the pictures themselves;

<sup>1</sup> The original (23 x 42 cm.) from which our illustration is made was acquired by the writer in 1936 in the village of Kuei Min Kuan in the county of Nan Chiang near the Shensi border. Such one-sheet almanacs, with instructions for the sowing and reaping of crops and care of domestic animals, interspersed with bits of folklore and popular illustrations, were printed from wood blocks and distributed for a pittance. The original sheet, of which the rectangle reproduced in fig. 1 formed the bottom, had the same width as this rectangle and was several times as high. It was found posted on a wall in the main street of the village.

but every Chinese is familiar with a rebus in which the image of a fish stands for the idea of "superfluity" or "excess," evidently by virtue of the identical sounds of the Chinese words for "fish," and for "more."<sup>2</sup> The picture of three boys holding a (triple) fish would be normally designated by the Chinese phrase, *san tzu yu yü*, which to the ear means either "three boys holding a fish," or "more than three boys." The latter reading of this implicit phrase opens the way to the mysterious total of ten boys alluded to in the inscription, a total of which the picture on the right provides six. The deficiency of one boy from the total of ten may be regarded as covered by the "excess" implied by the fish at the left—or it might even be made up by the second character of the inscription itself, which is the pictogram for "son" or "boy."

This somewhat childish play on words is not really of fundamental concern to us; for it is evident that the inscription has been added as a kind of rational cement between the two puzzle-pictures. While the interest of the Chinese reader is focused by the inscription upon a numerary problem, our interest lies rather in the designs themselves. That these pictures have an existence of their own, quite apart from the inscription which attempts to explain them, appears from the fact that both types occur widely outside China, and that, except in this Chinese example, we never find human figures associated with the three-fish motive. This can only mean that the three boys at the left of Fig. 1 did not originally form part of the three-fish motive, but were added in China in order to make up the favourite number of nine boys and thus justify the inscription. It may be said, indeed, that these designs are united not so much by the inscription as by an inner bond of structural logic, in so far as each design (the fishes at the left taken without the boys) consists of several bodies united in a single head. The force of this affinity becomes clear in the light of the fact that a similar combination of motives occurs in another culture.

Fig. 2 represents two motives appearing in close proximity to each other on a single leaf of a well-known mediaeval manuscript, the sketchbook of the XIIIth-century French architect, Villard de Honnecourt.<sup>3</sup> Here again, obviously, the designer was familiar with two different but related types of puzzle-picture, in which the bodies of fishes and of men, respectively, are merged. Prompted, no doubt, by recognition of their common structural logic, the artist reproduced these two types side by side, as equivalents. It appears from this juxtaposition that both types of motive, that of the three fish with a single head and that of a group of human figures with coalescent bodies, were not only current in the popular traditions of mediaeval Europe, but were there associated with each other, just as we find them associated in modern China.<sup>4</sup> Though it may not be possible

<sup>2</sup> The idea of "excess" nowadays associated with the motive of the fish in China, ostensibly because of a mechanical similarity of sounds, might very well go back to the symbolism of fertility universally associated with the fish, rather than to a mere accident of Chinese phonetics. On the doubtful nature of such Chinese puns, see another example: Schuster: "A Comparative Study of Motives in Western Chinese Folk Embroideries," *Monumenta Serica*, 2, Peking, 1936, p. 46, note 47.

<sup>3</sup> Our drawing is from the German edition of Hans R. Hahnloser, *Villard de Honnecourt, Kritische Gesamtausgabe des Bauhüttenbuches ms. fr 19093 der Pariser Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna, 1935, pl. 38, reproducing the verso of the nineteenth leaf of the original manuscript. See *op. cit.*, text, pp. 98-100. The fishes occur on the same page with the swastika and actually touch it. This suggests that it was the conceptual relationship of the two motives that prompted the artist to put them together. In fig. 2 we have taken the liberty of rearranging the relative position and scale of the two motives, without, however, modifying their forms.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, J. van den Gheyn, *Le psautier de Peterborough*, Haarlem [1906], pl. xxi, where the lower border of the page is interrupted by two cartouches, containing, respectively, the motive of three fish with a common head, and a device made up of two horses tied back to back and facing in opposite directions, in such a way that their legs, if animated, would set the device in rotation. The analogy of these two cartouches with the two motives of fig. 2 is obvious. Though the bodies of the horses do not coalesce, there can be no doubt that the artist was rationalizing an enigmatic design, in which, as in the human wheel at the right of fig. 1, there were twice as many bodies as heads (in this case equine instead of human). Compare the motive of four deer with one head in ancient Greece and modern India: Coomaraswamy, "Some Ancient Elements in Indian Decorative Art," *Orientalische Zeitschrift*, 2, 1913-14, figs. 1 and 2.

to provide intermediate documentation between the occurrences of this pair of motives in gothic Europe and in modern China, still it seems reasonable to conclude that both occurrences represent branches of a single tradition which has much older roots.

Leaving the motive of the group of human figures for separate consideration later, we shall review here certain other examples of the motive of three fish with a common head which occur in the Far East. Fig. 3 shows a roundel of embroidery, again from Western China,<sup>5</sup> in which the motive of three fish with a single head is used as a means of suggesting aquatic life and thus designating the water which supports a festive barge. The fact that the three-fish motive occurs in women's handiwork, as well as in the work of the woodblock-cutter in Western China, confirms our impression that it is widespread and well known among the general population of this region. Undoubtedly it is known also in other parts of China.<sup>6</sup>

Fig. 4 provides us with another Chinese example of what seems to be the same motive, carved on a wooden belt-toggle.<sup>7</sup> The tails of the three fishes are here twisted to suggest rotary motion, like that of a triskele. Although the eye has been omitted from the common head, and the three tails are forked in such a way that, it must be said, they hardly look piscine, still it is difficult to imagine by what the design could have been inspired if not by the image of three fish with a common head.<sup>8</sup>

If the question be asked how far back the motive of three fish with a single head can be traced in China, it cannot be answered, to the writer's present knowledge, with any documentation from earlier epochs than that of the present day. Still it seems likely that the motive has a venerable prehistory in the Far East, just as it has in the West. If no early Chinese examples of it have thus far come to light, this deficiency is no doubt to be explained by the circumstance that the motive is one of a sort which has always appealed more to the popular imagination than to the highly skilled professional artist, who generally strives for a certain refinement of naturalism. Experience proves that it is chiefly the refined products of such professional art which, in tombs and palaces, are preserved for the archaeologist's spade, while the humbler creations of popular taste were always left to perish, as they are still largely left to perish wherever they happen to survive in the living traditions of our day.<sup>9</sup> Despite these adverse circumstances, it is possible to point to an early example of what seems to be a three-fish motive of the type that interests us in the art of an ancient culture peripheral to that of China. Fig. 5 shows the incised decoration on a terra cotta platter excavated about a decade ago from a tomb in Northern Annam. It represents a late, bronze-age, phase of the so-called Dongson culture, which reached its culmination at about the beginning of the Christian era. The art of this culture combined certain elements which seem to be of local native origin

<sup>5</sup> This roundel is one of five, all dissimilar, adorning a bed-valance from the town of T'ung Ch'uan in Szech'uan province, in the writer's collection. For further information about cotton embroideries from Western China see Schuster, "A Comparative Study of Motives in Western Chinese Folk Embroideries," *Monumenta Serica*, 2, Peking, 1936, and also Schuster, *Peasant Embroideries of China*, Asia, 37, January, 1937, pp. 26-31. Diameter of roundel, 19.5 cm.

<sup>6</sup> A Chinese acquaintance from Shantung has assured me that the motive is current there as an embroidery pattern. It occurs again in the drawings of a woman from the environs of Peking.

<sup>7</sup> The original was kindly lent for reproduction by Mr. Lawrence Sickman of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City (1939). For further information about such toggles see Wolfram Eberhard, "Chinese Toggles," *El Palacio* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), 49, 1942, pp. 91-104. Diameter, ca. 6 cm.

<sup>8</sup> It is possible that the carver deliberately blended the motive of the three fish with another, more familiar, motive of Chinese popular tradition, that of the mythical three-legged toad called *ch'an*, in order to make his design the more puzzling. On the other hand, it is possible that his intention was simply to render the streamers on the tails of Chinese goldfish.

<sup>9</sup> For an elaboration of this idea see my article, "Some Peasant Embroideries from Western China," *Embroidery (Journal of the Embroiderers' Guild, London)*, September, 1935, pp. 87-96.



FIG. 1—DESIGN FROM A CHINESE ALMANAC, 20TH CENTURY

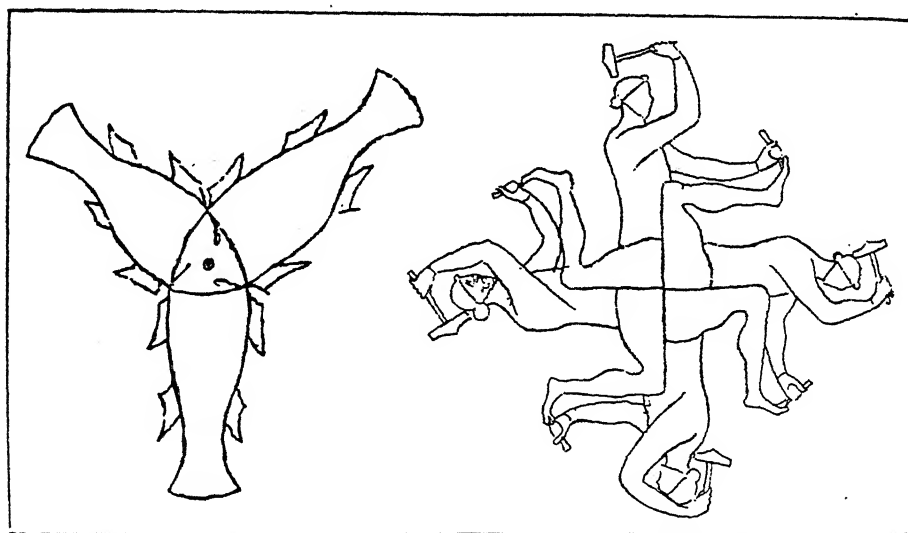


FIG. 2—MOTIVES FROM A 13TH-CENTURY FRENCH MANUSCRIPT



with elements which are clearly inspired by the art of neighbouring China in the contemporary Han dynasty. While the concentric bands of little circles connected by oblique tangents are a specifically local or "Indonesian" element in the design of this platter, it has been suggested that the fishes, on the other hand, owe their inspiration to Chinese models.<sup>10</sup> This seems plausible, inasmuch as fishes are sometimes represented in the bottoms of Chinese bronze vessels of the Han dynasty, as if they were swimming in the liquid which the vessels were meant to contain. Regardless of the source of their inspiration, the arrangement of the fishes in a group of three with their heads touching suggests relation to our prototype, and this impression is confirmed by the fact that the mouths of the fishes are made to overlap. Though it is true that the three heads are not actually merged in one, it is quite conceivable that the designer of the platter was familiar with the triune design in the popular art of his day, but that in response to the tendency toward rationalism always characteristic of the trained and accomplished draughtsman, he interpreted his model in such a way as to show the three fishes in osculation rather than actually united in a single head. We have, thus, at least a strong hint that the motive of three fish with one head was current in the popular traditions of the Han dynasty either in China or in the closely allied culture of Northern Annam of that time.

If the motive of the three fish with a common head was known in ancient China or Indochina, one might expect to find it also in ancient India. In this expectation we are not disappointed, if we may judge from the drawing of a Buddha's footprint (*Buddhapāda*, *Pāduka*) said to be found before the *vajrāsan* throne of the *Mahābodhi* at Bodhgaya in Bihar, Fig. 6.<sup>11</sup> Here the motive of the three fish with a common head occupies a position on the ball of the foot which is sometimes occupied by the motive of a pair of fish represented belly-to-belly.<sup>12</sup> It seems as if a motive from a popular strain of tradition, that of three fish with a common head, had here been substituted for a two-fish motive prescribed by ancient religious canon. This substitution, at whatever historical period it may have taken place, is of interest to us because it provides an unmistakable indication that our three-fish motive has been current, for at least some time, in Indian popular tradition. It would not be surprising to find that the motive survives in popular usage in India to-day. Perhaps the present writing will come to the notice of others who may bring such Indian examples to light.

If the evidence for the antiquity of our motive in the Far East and India remains doubtful, there is no such doubt about its antiquity in the occident. Figs. 7 and 8 represent two bowls of a well-known type of blue pottery dating from the eighteenth dynasty of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt, hence about 1900 to 1600 B.C.<sup>13</sup> It is not necessary to

<sup>10</sup> See Olov Jansé, "Rapport préliminaire d'une mission archéologique en Indochine," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, 9, 1935, p. 149. The platter is reproduced photographically in pl. liv of that article. Our drawing was made from an enlarged photograph of the original in the Musée Louis Finot in Hanoi, kindly supplied by the direction of the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, in Hanoi.

<sup>11</sup> Our drawing is from Tōichirō Naitō, "Yakushiji Kondo Sanzon to Horiuji Hekiga (Bhaisajyavidurya-tathagata de Yakushiji et les peintures murales de Hōryūji)," *Tōyō Bijutsu*, vol. 12 (=vol. 10?), May, 1931 (in Japanese), p. 13. I am indebted to Dr. B. Rowland for kindly calling my attention to this article. The author does not give the source of illustration or date of the carving.

<sup>12</sup> The motive of two fish occurs on the ball of a footprint in Yakushiji, Japan: Naitō, *op. cit.* Presumably this arrangement is derived from Indian prototypes. The pair of fish is, in any case, an ancient Buddhist symbol. See Coomaraswamy, *A History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York, 1927, index, s.v. "symbols."

<sup>13</sup> Figs. 7 and 8 were made after the photographic reproductions in Wolfgang Krönig, "Ägyptische Fayence-Schalen des Neuen Reiches," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo*, 5, 1934, pl. xxiii, a and b respectively. The design of fig. 7, the original of which is in the Berlin Museum, has been often reproduced. The original of fig. 8, together with two other fragmentary bowls showing similar designs, is in the British Museum.

A PERENNIAL PUZZLE



FIG. 3.—CHINA, 19TH CENTURY

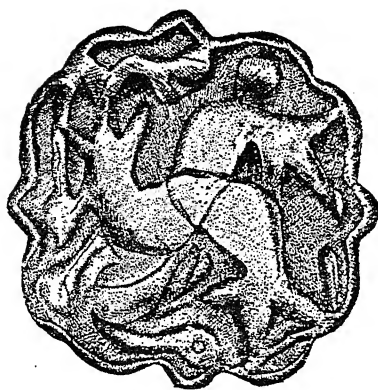


FIG. 4.—CHINA, 19TH CENTURY

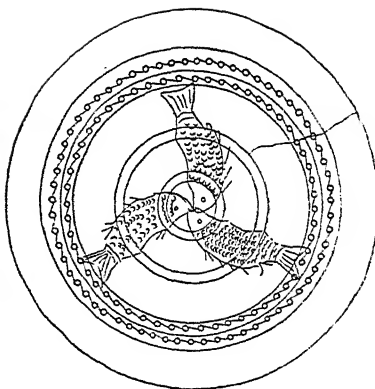


FIG. 5.—ANNAM, TIME OF CHRIST

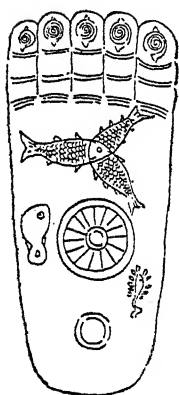


FIG. 6.—INDIA



FIG. 7.—EGYPT  
2ND MILLENNIUM B.C.



FIG. 8.—EGYPT  
2ND MILLENNIUM B.C.

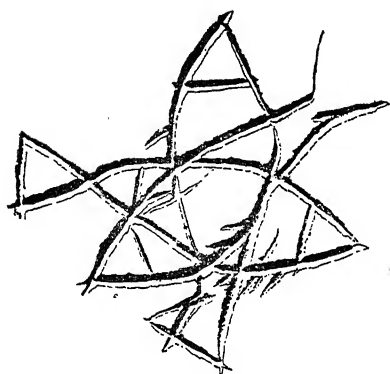


FIG. 9.—EGYPT  
(COPTIC?)

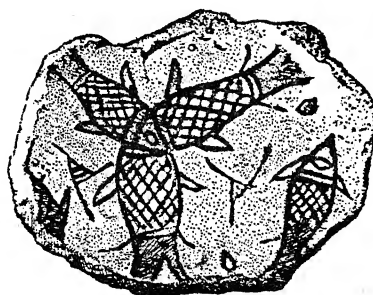


FIG. 10.—EGYPT  
14TH-15TH CENTURY



FIG. 11.—SPAIN  
15TH CENTURY

assume that these early Egyptian designs must be the actual ancestors of all later examples, wherever they may occur. Though they are, and may remain, the only examples known to us from such an early epoch, still it is hardly likely that these bowls were the only objects embellished with such designs in their day. Probably the motive of three fish with a common head was already current in the popular traditions not only of Egypt, but of other regions in the Near East in the second millennium before Christ. The value of this ancient occurrence of the motive is not that it establishes the place of its origin, but simply that it helps us to understand the enormous geographical breadth of its distribution in the modern world; for this occurrence means that wherever the motive originated, it has had a long time in which to spread.

In at least two subsequent epochs our motive comes to light again in Egypt. The cliff-carving from Southern Upper Egypt reproduced in Fig. 9, according to the author who first published it, "may be of Coptic origin, or . . . may be much earlier."<sup>14</sup> Though it is true that the three fishes are here united, not in a common head, but only by the crossing of their bodies, it obviously requires but a slight accommodation one way or the other to effect this difference, and there can hardly be any doubt that the two types of design are related. Thus the three fishes of the bronze-age platter from Annam, Fig. 5, and the three fishes of the Egyptian cliff-carving, Fig. 9, may be regarded as the products of two diametrically opposed tendencies. Assuming that both designs are based upon the motive of three fish united in a common head, it appears that in the former the fishes were pulled apart until they almost lost contact with each other, while in the latter they were pushed inward until they overlapped, not with their heads, but in the median parts of their bodies. The latter type of motive has enjoyed considerable popularity in recent centuries in Europe.<sup>15</sup>

The motive of three united fishes has its third Egyptian incarnation in the painted decoration of Muhammadan pottery of the Mamluk period in the XIVth and XVth centuries after Christ. Fig. 10 shows one of a number of sherds from this epoch in which three fishes are joined in a single head.<sup>16</sup>

Though in Europe in the last three or four centuries the overlapping of the bodies of the fishes seems to have been more generally favoured than the union by their heads, the latter arrangement continued popular at least until the XVth century, as we see from a Spanish moresque pottery bowl from Paterna, near Valencia, illustrated in Fig. 11.<sup>17</sup> No doubt further research would bring to light additional examples of this mode of union of the fishes in the art of gothic, renaissance, or modern times in Europe.<sup>18</sup>

It may be said that the puzzle of the three fish with a common head lies not only in their peculiar union, but in their persistence. Has this motive, which at intervals throughout several millennia appears at various points between the Mediterranean and

<sup>14</sup> See Hans A. Winkler, *Rock-Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*, London, 1939, vol. ii, p. 15. Our drawing is after the photographic reproduction, *op. cit.*, ii, pl. vii, fig. 2.

<sup>15</sup> See especially examples cited or illustrated by Deonna, "Êtres monstrueux à organes communs," *Revue archéologique*, 31, 1930, fig. 4, nos. 3-7. The list could be extended.

<sup>16</sup> Our illustration is after *La Céramique égyptienne de l'époque musulmane*, published by the Musée de l'art arabe du Caire, Basel, 1922, pl. 119. For additional examples see Cleves Stead, *Fantastic Fauna, Decorative Animals in Moslem Ceramics*, Cairo, R. Schindler (1935), pl. 15, fig. 1, and pl. 29, fig. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Our drawing is after the photographic reproduction in *Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Secció històrico-arqueològica*, vol. 7, 1921-26, p. 194, fig. 338. Compare a similar three-fish design in a XIIIth-century bowl from Orvieto, Italy: Krönig, *op. cit.*, pl. xxiii, e; and see the remarks about this similarity by Ernst Kühnel, *Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 46, 1925, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> The motive of three fish occurs in European heraldry. See Deonna, *op. cit.*, p. 37, citing Thomas Soule, *Heraldry of Fish*, London, 1842. Johann Siebmacher's *Wappenbuch* shows the three fish united in one head in the arms of at least one German family, the Kreckwitz' of Silesia.

A PERENNIAL PUZZLE

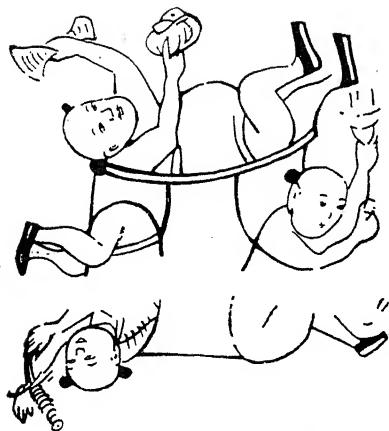


FIG. 12.—CHINA

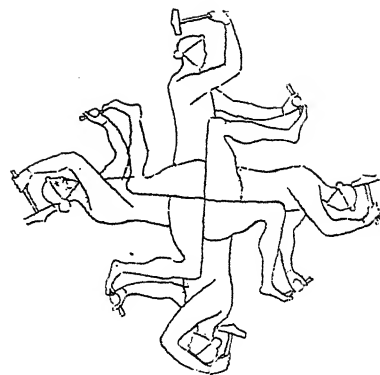


FIG. 13.—FRANCE



FIG. 14.—CEYLON

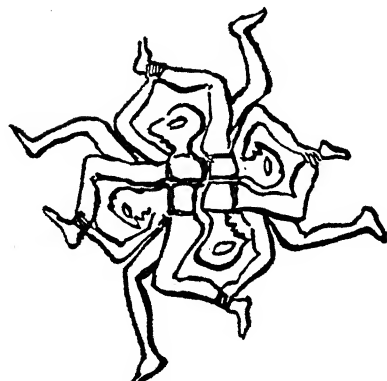


FIG. 15.—MESOPOTAMIA

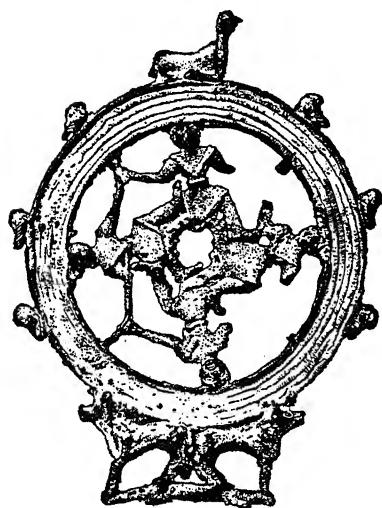


FIG. 16.—PERSIA



FIG. 17.—IRELAND

the Yellow Sea, been simply "fished up" again and again out of the unconscious depths of the human mind—each representation conceived anew without the suggestion of a pre-existing example? Or must we conclude that, regardless how great the intervals of time and space between occurrences of the motive, all these representations are related to each other in terms of cultural contact? At least two authors who have, to some extent, concerned themselves with the problem of this motive, seem to incline to the former view.<sup>19</sup> We must align ourselves, rather, with the latter. It seems to us that every occurrence of the motive, whether ancient or modern, whether in Egypt, Europe, India or China, was suggested to the designer by his familiarity with the motive as it passed about in the common currency of popular tradition in his time and place. We may conceive of popular tradition as a kind of undercurrent which flows deeply beneath the reflecting surface of history, a movement of long duration and great force which, though generally hidden from the academic view, comes to the surface occasionally in unexpected places, bringing with it mementos of distant times and places. In terms of another figure, each particular tradition may be regarded as connected by a kind of endless, if invisible, chain with all the others. The task of the student is simply to bring to light the missing links of this chain.

In conclusion we return for a moment to the puzzle-picture made up of human figures, as we found it associated with the three-fish motive in our Chinese almanac, Fig. 1, and in the sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, Fig. 2. As might be expected, this type of motive also, like that of the three fishes, has a wide distribution in time and space. We cannot attempt to explore this distribution fully, for the "human swastika" or "human wheel" seems to occur much more widely than the motive of the three fish, and unlike the latter, it is subject to infinite variations of arrangement, posing problems of classification. Still, it seems advisable to call attention to at least a few examples of this type as it occurs in other traditions, even though not in association with the motive of the three coalescent fish as in Figs. 1 and 2. The examples of the "human wheel," reproduced in Figs. 12 to 17 are identified, with a few comparative remarks, in the accompanying data.<sup>20</sup> As for the meaning of such motives, we prefer to leave this, as we leave the meaning of the three fish with a common head, an open question, regarding the medley of human figures simply as another puzzle-picture, which likewise has made its perennial appeal to the popular imagination.

<sup>19</sup> Thus Hahnloser, *op. cit.*, p. 100, and Krönig, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>20</sup> See the list of figures, page 125. As want of space prevents the reproduction of all the examples originally intended for illustration, the following references to additional examples of the "human wheel" may be of use to the interested student.

1. George Groslier, "Soixante-seize dessins cambodgiens," *Arts et archéologie khmers*, 1, 1921-23, p. 351, fig. 81, no. 23 (two wrestlers).
2. Leon Legrain, *Archaic Seal Impressions (Ur Excavations, vol. iii)*, pl. 30, and pl. 57, no. 518; also C. L. Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery (Ur Excavations, vol. ii)*, pl. 207, no. 214; p. 352, no. 214; p. 588, U 13607.
3. Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, London, 1939, pl. xiv, h, and p. 56.
4. Walter Andrae, in *Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 58, 1937, p. 34, fig. 4; and Anna Roes, "Tierwirbel," *Ipek*, 11, 1936-37, p. 89, fig. 8.
5. R. F. S. Starr, *Nuzi*, Harvard University Press, 1937-39, pl. 140, G.
6. André Parrot, "Les fouilles de Mari, troisième campagne," *Syria*, 18, 1937, pl. xii, fig. 2.
7. Wm. H. Ward, *Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Washington, 1910, no. 706.
8. F. Henry (as cited under fig. 17), p. 83 f. (several Irish variants).
9. John Romilly Allen, *Early Christian Symbolism*, London, 1887, fig. 147 (Scotland).
10. Friedrich Behn, *Allgermanische Kunst*, Munich, 1926, pl. 33 (two wrestlers).



## A PERENNIAL PUZZLE

### FIGURES

FIG. 1.—Design from a Chinese Almanac. XXth Century.

FIG. 2.—Motives from a XIIIth-Century French Manuscript.

FIG. 3.—China, XIXth Century. FIG. 4.—China, XIXth Century. FIG. 5.—Annam, time of Christ.

FIG. 6.—India. FIG. 7.—Egypt, 2nd millennium B.C. FIG. 8.—Egypt, 2nd millennium B.C.

FIG. 9.—Egypt (Coptic?). FIG. 10.—Egypt, XIVth–XVth Century. FIG. 11.—Spain, XVth Century.

FIG. 12.—“Human swastika” from modern Chinese almanac, fig. 1. This design, namely that of a medley of boys with six bodies and four heads in rotary arrangement, occurs in China also in a three-dimensional version: thus in two toggles, one of ivory, seen in dealer's stock in New York, 1947, and one of jet, in the collection of Miss C. F. Bieber (cf. note 7).

FIG. 13.—“Human swastika” from the XIIIth-century sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, fig. 2.

FIG. 14.—“Human swastika” on Kandyan brass tobacco box (XVIIIth century?). After A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, Broad Campden, 1908, fig. 28. The original shows a compendium of six puzzle-pictures, evidently brought together by the same principle of association which we observe in figs. 1 and 2. Omitted from our drawing is a pair of rampant lions supporting the roundel: these are reminiscent of a pair of lions flanking the human swastika on a Sumerian seal (note 20, no. 2); and they may have a conceptual counterpart in the pair of bulls supporting the Persian roundel, fig. 16. Cf. also note 20, no. 9.

FIG. 15.—Sumerian seal impression. Diameter, ca. 4 cm. After Legrain, *Archaic Seal Impressions (Ur Excavations, vol. iii)*, pl. 21, no. 393. Legrain points out that this device provides a pictographic parallel to the historical inscription reading “kings of the four corners of the world”; and, in general, that the various forms of human swastika occurring on Sumerian seals evidently indicate the four points of the compass and imply the idea of “universality,” especially with reference to the reigns of the kings on whose seals they appear. (*Op. cit.*, p. 37.) For a “swastika” made up of two figures in rotation (wrestlers?) see *op. cit.*, pl. no. 274, and compare our note 20, nos. 1 and 10, as well as motive “C” in the original illustration from which our fig. 14 is taken. Legrain observes that their four feet point at the four corners of the horizon. The type of bodily interlace represented in fig. 15 has its analogue in the interlaced bodies of three lions in a well known seal from Mohenjo-Daro. See Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilisation*, pl. cxii, no. 386.

FIG. 16.—Bronze emblem for the top of a standard of Persian origin but uncertain date (pre-Achaemenid or Parthian?). From Anna Roes, *Greek Geometric Art*, Oxford, 1933, fig. 31. See further reference given there, and cf. N. C. Debevoise, “A Parthian Standard,” *Revue d'assyriologie*, 27, 1930, pp. 137–39. René Dussaud in Pope's *Survey of Persian Art*, i, p. 262 f, ascribes this object, and a companion piece, *op. cit.*, pl. 42, to Luristan in about the VIIth century B.C. The animals found on the outer rim of this wheel have their counterparts in the Sumerian seal, note 20, no. 2, and in Ceylon: see the remarks under fig. 14.

FIG. 17.—Roundel from the Book of Kells. Irish illumination of the VIIIth century. From Françoise Henry, *La sculpture irlandaise*, Paris, 1933, fig. 46, c. Note similarity with fig. 14.

## COSMIC SYMBOLISM OF THE DRAGON ROBES OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY

By SCHUYLER CAMMANN (U.S.A.)

THE dragon robes (called *lung-pao* or *mang-pao*<sup>1</sup>) were worn as semi-formal dress by nobles and officials of the Chinese court during the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911). Having been developed from the national costume of the Manchus, who then ruled China, in outward appearance they marked a complete break with Chinese costume tradition<sup>2</sup>; and yet, in their magnificent decoration, which emphasized cosmic symbolism, they represented some of the oldest ideas in Chinese philosophy.

As their names imply, the dragon, as symbol of the dynasty, constituted their principal decoration. The imperial, five-clawed *lung* dragon was worn by the Emperor and his family, and by others who were especially awarded the right to display them (usually for acts of merit), while the lesser nobles and officials wore the four-clawed *mang* dragon. In fact, on the earliest examples of these robes, dating from the late XVIIth and early XVIIIth centuries, facing dragons coiled in eight large medallions<sup>3</sup> generally made up the entire decoration.<sup>4</sup> On a few of these earlier ones, and on all the later robes, waves and mountain peaks were added to the base of the garment, and the upper portion in which the dragons themselves were situated, was considered as the Sky, so the whole robe portrayed a plan of the Universe.<sup>5</sup>

This symbolism became more obvious at the next stage of the evolution of these robes, in the mid-XVIIIth century, when the sky area was filled with cloud wisps, and the dragons broke out of their restraining circles to writhe among them.<sup>6</sup> (By this time, the dragons on the skirts were always shown in profile.)

Finally as the dynasty degenerated in the later XVIIIth and early XIXth centuries, the background became cluttered with symbols of good fortune, which had once been religious emblems but had lost their basic meanings.<sup>7</sup> At the same time the "water" strip at the base of the robe was increasingly widened to depict the deep sea below the waves (indicated by a convention of straight, or wavy, slanted stripes called *li-shui*),

<sup>1</sup> Meaning literally "5-clawed-dragon robes" and "4-clawed-dragon robes," depending on the type of dragon depicted (see text, second paragraph). To Occidentals they are popularly known as "mandarin coats," or even more inaccurately, as "court robes." The actual court robes (*chao-fu*) were characterized by wide flaring collars, and a separate design for jacket and skirt, instead of an all-over pattern as on the dragon robes.

<sup>2</sup> The previous dynasty of Ming (1368-1644) also had dragon robes (awarded for merit), but these were traditionally Chinese in cut, with wide sleeves and very full skirts, impractical for anything but a sedentary court life. The Manchu dragon robes, by contrast, had close-fitting sleeves, tightly-belted waists, and skirts split for horseback-riding, an eminently suitable garb for a people who prided themselves on coming from a race of semi-nomadic mounted warriors.

<sup>3</sup> One each on breast and back, one on each shoulder, and two on the front and rear of the skirt, respectively. As nine was the mystic number, the robes of the Emperor, his princes, and the highest officials generally had a ninth dragon, on the inner front flap of the robe, where it was covered when the robe was worn, and thus could not spoil the total symmetry.

<sup>4</sup> See Fig. 1, above. For a more elaborate example, with a background diaper of smaller dragons, see Lindsay Hughes, "The Kuo Ch'in Wang Textiles," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 6th series, vol. 24, September, 1943, Fig. 19, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> The Nelson Gallery in Kansas City has a fine example. See *Costumes from the Forbidden City* (the catalogue of the recent exhibition of Chinese robes at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Spring, 1945), Fig. 27.

<sup>6</sup> See Fig. 2, above.

<sup>7</sup> Notably the Eight Buddhist Symbols, the Eight Symbols of the Taoist Immortals, the "Eight Jewels." See S. Cammann, "Symbolism in Far Eastern Art," *Encyclopaedia of the Arts* (New York, 1946), pp. 981-2.

with the result that the dragons had to shrink back to their original size in the medallions, in order to make room for all the extraneous decoration.<sup>8</sup>

Thus we see that the general pattern of all the later dragon robes—excluding the dragons themselves, and the numerous auspicious symbols—represented the Universe in general, as the Chinese conceived it; with the Sky above, the Sea below, and the mountain rising from the sea (shown four times, on the front and back, and at the right and left of the robe) symbolizing the Earth.<sup>9</sup> In short, the Emperor and his nobles and officials were figuratively “clothed in the Universe.”

The most interesting element in this pattern of the Universe, and the one which has been least discussed, is the mountain. This corresponds to Mount Meru of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, but the Chinese usually refer to it as K'un-lun Shan, a semi-mythical mountain in Central Asia, at what was thought to be the centre of the Earth.

The earliest Chinese reference to K'un-lun Shan as the Universal axis occurs in a Han Dynasty book on the wonders of the world, said to have been written in the II<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. This divides the Earth into nine regions—based on the eight directions and the centre, describing K'un-lun in the last section, devoted to the central region.<sup>10</sup>

The description says: “K'un-lun Shan has a bronze pillar on it. Its height pierces Heaven, and therefore it is called the Pillar of Heaven (*T'ien chu*). This is 1,000 miles in diameter (3,000 Chinese *li*), and is round on the outside, as though pared. At its base are dazzling dwellings, 1,000 feet square; nine Immortals rule them. On its top it has a great bird called the *hsi-yu*,<sup>11</sup> which faces south. Its extended left wing shields Tung Wang Kung, and its right wing shields Hsi Wang Mu.<sup>12</sup> On its back there is a small place that has no feathers.<sup>13</sup>”

It is interesting to note in connection with this passage, that the earliest Buddhist pagodas in China are said to have consisted of a pillar containing relics, set on top of a mound. The pillar on the mound no doubt was a symbol of the Universe, intended to recall the greater pillar on K'un-lun Shan. As none of these appear to have survived, we do not know whether some or all of them had birds on their tops to represent the fabulous *hsi-yu*. However, the great VII<sup>th</sup> century pagoda (Ch'ien-Hsin T'a) at Tali, in Western Yunnan, originally had a huge golden bird called a *p'êng* on its spire, atop the metal column that formed its core,<sup>14</sup> and this may well have been a survival of earlier representations of the great bird atop the column on a mound.

<sup>8</sup> See Fig. 3, above.

<sup>9</sup> The same universal diagram of land, sea, and sky, in slightly less stylized form, also appeared on the “mandarin squares,” or badges of rank, worn by nobles and officials in China during the Late Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties. See S. Cammann, “The Development of the Mandarin Square,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, August, 1944.

<sup>10</sup> The *Shên i ching*, attributed to Tung-fang Shuo, a Han statesman of the II<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. The following quotation is from the *Han Wei ts'ung-shu* edition, pp. 13, 13b. (Our translation).

<sup>11</sup> The phrase *hsi-yu*—its original meaning as the name of a bird having been long since forgotten—remains in the Chinese language as an expression meaning “rare.” It sounds as though it might be a transliteration from another Asiatic language.

<sup>12</sup> Hsi Wang Mu, the “Queen Mother of the West,” is one of the most famous figures of Chinese Taoist folklore. Tung Wang Kung, otherwise known as Tung Wang Fu, the “King Father of the East,” is her less-famous consort. They are often shown as a couple on the bronze mirrors of the Late Han and Three Kingdoms periods. See John C. Ferguson, *Chinese Mythology (Mythology of All Races)*, vol. 8, Boston, 1937, pp. 116–117.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Carl Schuster, author of a brilliant study on the *Sunbird*, soon to be published, suggested to us that this reference to a bare spot would almost unquestionably identify the *hsi-yu* as the sunbird, pointing out that there are many legends in the Indian, Chinese, and Greek traditions, in which the sunbird loses a feather, or the solar hero shoots at it and dislodges a feather.

<sup>14</sup> The *Yunnan t'ung chih*, describing the original form of this pagoda, says: “they cast gold to make a spire; the spire had a golden *p'êng*,” (Ch. 13, 10). The *p'êng* in Chinese tradition was a fabulous bird of gigantic proportions (“one cannot know how many thousand *li* its back measures”), and was always spoken of as a single bird, so there can be no doubt that the Tali pagoda originally had only one huge bird on its summit.

By the Ch'ing Dynasty, the concept of the great bird on a towering column had long since been lost from the tradition of the world-mountain, and only the bare mountain itself was shown on the robes and elsewhere. The original tradition spoke of K'un-lun Shan as consisting of five parts, four lesser ranges grouped around the central mass<sup>15</sup>; and sometimes later Chinese artists depicted all five as separate peaks—a tall, central one, with two others flanking it, like descending steps. More frequently, however, they pictured the mountain as seen in profile from the North or South, with merely the central mass and one peak on each side. On the dragon robes, the five-peaked form is very rare,<sup>16</sup> and almost always the four mountain groups represent the world-mountain as seen in profile from the four cardinal points, with the central peak and two lateral ones (the latter sometimes slightly detached on earlier examples). On the robes of the Middle Ch'ing they are lofty and towering, amid high curling waves,<sup>17</sup> but toward the end of the Dynasty, in the XIXth century, they became lower, and more squat, among calmer seas.<sup>18</sup> With all its changes in form, however, the mountain never lost its identity as the world-mountain, the focal point in the Universal plan.

Very rarely, the basic symbolism was altered to portray the Universe by showing a particular section of it rather than the comprehensive view. The few robes of this type still show the Earth, Sea and Sky, but in place of the mountain they have rocky islands jutting from a storm-tossed sea. Two fine examples have recently come into American collections. Both are burial robes, and as one would expect, we must look to the Chinese beliefs in the life after death for an explanation of these deviations from the conventional pattern.

The first of these robes, now in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, is stated to have come from the tomb of Prince Kuo, who died in 1738, though it was undoubtedly made several decades later.<sup>19</sup> It has been called the "Crane and Gate" robe, because of the numerous cranes in the background and the architectural structures which further distinguish the unusual rock masses.

Actually the central island is apparently none other than the fabulous *P'êng Tao*, or *P'êng-lai Shan*, the legendary abode of the Immortals in the Eastern Sea (Po Hai), which has played a prominent part in Chinese tradition since the Han Dynasty.<sup>20</sup> As described in the *Shih chi*, the famous historical chronicle of that period,<sup>21</sup> it is noted as possessing the drugs of immortality which grant the boon of eternal life. In short, the structure on the central island, which has been loosely called a "gate," is none other

A Ch'ing Dynasty account of the same pagoda said that at this time,—more than a thousand years later—it had four golden geese on the four corners of its roof, like the four metal birds on the East Pagoda (Tung-su T'a) in modern Kunming (Ch'ên Ting, *T'ien Ch'ien chi-yü*, reprinted in the *Lung-wei mi-shu*, vol. 7, p. 25 b). These may well have been added during one of the re-buildings, the original bird having presumably been lost or destroyed in the meantime; for the main Tali pagoda was rebuilt several times, notably during the Yüan, or Mongol Dynasty, and again after the great earth-quake of 1514, as well as more recently, following the Moslem Rebellion in the last century (*Yünnan hsü t'ung chih* 66.25 b).

<sup>15</sup> Tung-fang Shuo, *Shih-chou chi* (Han Wei ts'ung-k'an ed.), 10b.

<sup>16</sup> A fine imperial dragon robe in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has this feature. See *Costumes from the Forbidden City*, Fig. 18.

<sup>17</sup> See Fig. 2, above.

<sup>18</sup> See Fig. 3, above.

<sup>19</sup> This is pictured as Fig. 29 in *Costumes from the Forbidden City*. The very small dragons and the extended *li-shui*, as well as the close diaper pattern of the background and the many extraneous symbols, identify this as a robe of the later Ch'ien-lung period (second half of the XVIIIth century).

<sup>20</sup> Note that while K'un-lun Shan is generally shown as though it were in the distance, beyond the waves, the more formless rocks of P'êng-lai are shown jutting from the midst of the sea, as though to emphasize the fact that they represent islands.

<sup>21</sup> Szu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih chi*, 28 (*fêng-shan* section), p. 11 b.

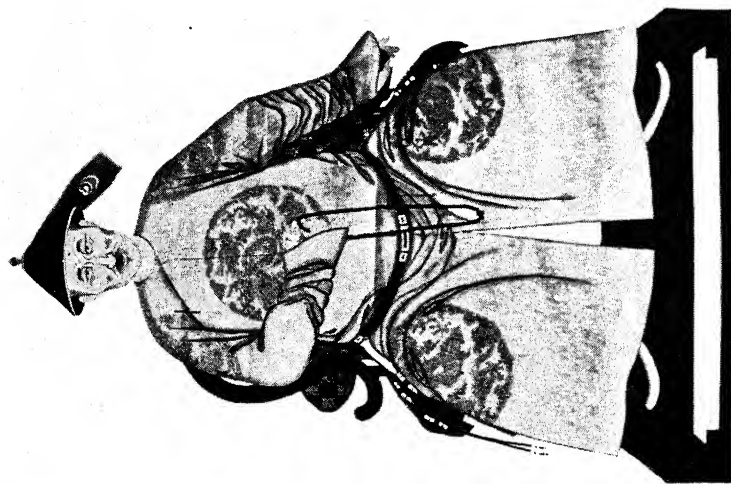


FIG. 1.—THE FIRST TYPE OF CH'ING DRAGON ROBE,  
WITHOUT MARKED COSMIC SYMBOLISM.  
AN EARLY 18TH CENTURY PORTRAIT IN THE ROYAL  
ONTARIO MUSEUM OF ARCHEOLOGY, TORONTO, CANADA

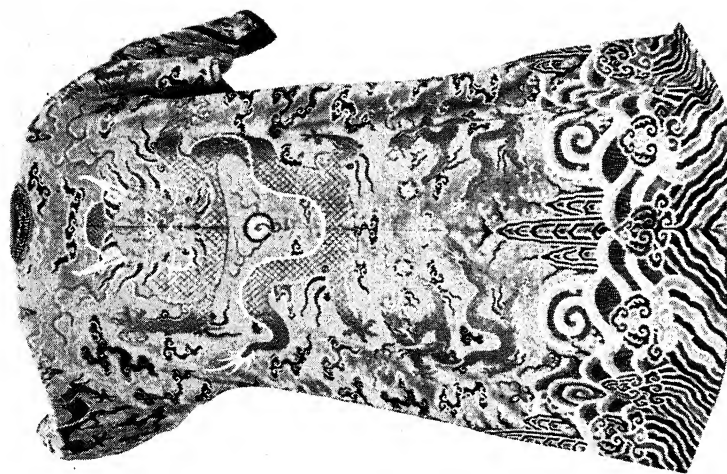


FIG. 2.—THE MORE DEVELOPED TYPE OF DRAGON ROBE,  
C. 1730-40, SHOWING LARGE DRAGONS AND WELL  
DEVELOPED MOUNTAINS AND WAVES.  
Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

PLATE XXXVI

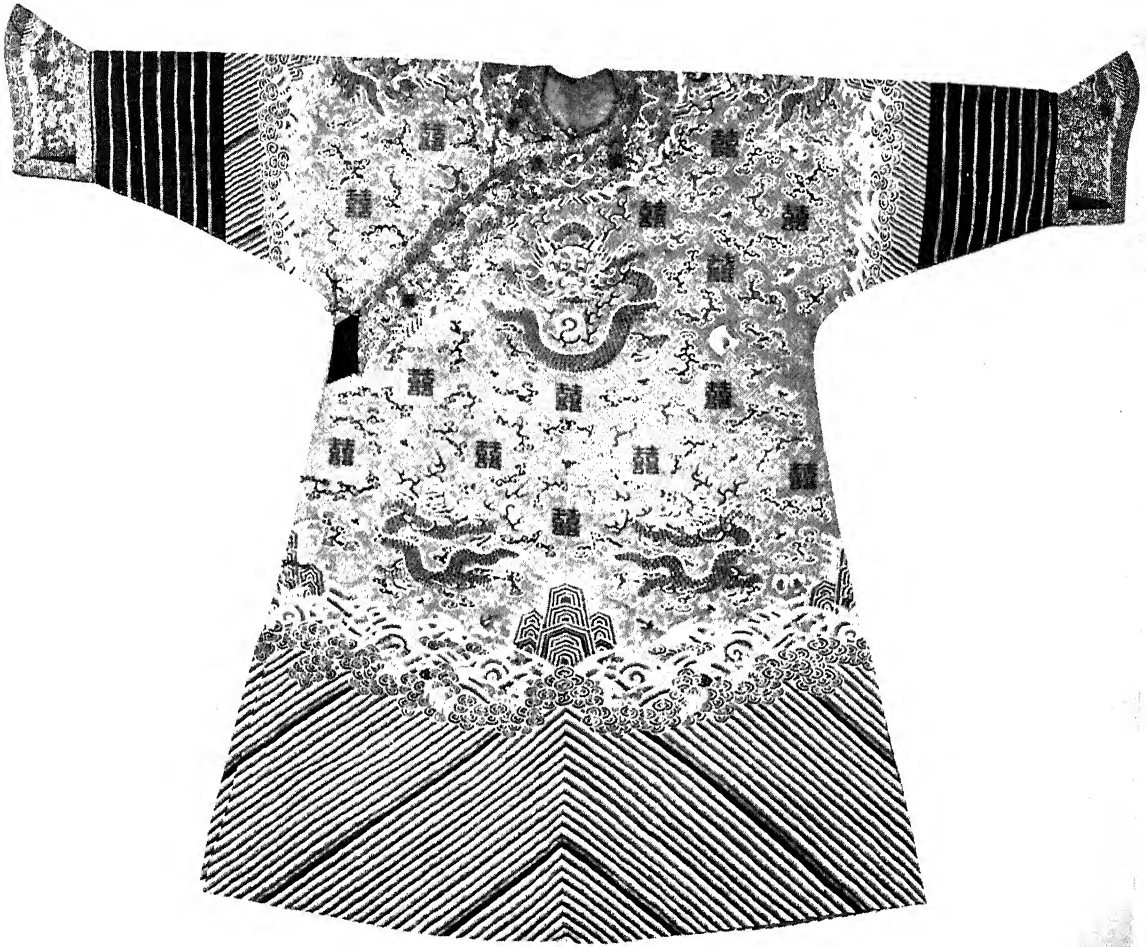


FIG. 3—A LATER CH'ING DRAGON ROBE (MADE FOR AN IMPERIAL WEDDING),  
EARLY 19TH CENTURY, SHOWING THE DIMINISHED DRAGONS, SQUAB MOUNTAIN,  
AND GREATLY EXTENDED LI SHUI (CONVENTIONALIZED WATER PATTERN).

Metropolitan Museum, New York City.



than the palace of silver and gold (Chih-ch'êng Kung),<sup>22</sup> the abode of the Immortals on the mystic isle. The islands at the sides of the robe, which also have pavilions on them, no doubt represent either other aspects of the same island, or—more likely—its two satellites, the islands called Fang-chang and Yin-chou, which with P'êng-lai form the Isles of the Blest in traditional Chinese folklore. What could be a more appropriate subject for the burial robe of a noble who wished to continue the pleasures of the court in the life after death?

The other variant robe is owned by the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City,<sup>23</sup> and is declared, upon much better grounds, to have also come from the tomb of Prince Kuo. This, too, obviously represents the Isles of the Immortals—for although the palace buildings are not shown this time—the craggy islands have the pines of immortality and the numerous white cranes which are traditionally found there. In fact, the latter elements have earned it the rather unimaginative name of “the Wave and Pine Tree, or Hundred Cranes robe.”<sup>24</sup>

The presence of the white cranes on this robe is explained by the old texts which say that all the birds and animals on P'êng-lai Shan are pure white; and incidentally, it is probably because of their association with the Immortal Isles, and not because of their reputed great age (as later authors have rationalized it), that they have come to be considered as symbols of longevity in China. On many late Ch'ing robes, a few cranes were often included among the auspicious emblems in the background, merely as symbols of long life, and of course they have the same general connotation on this robe; but their great number here, associated with the rock masses, leaves no doubt that they represent primarily the holy birds of P'êng-lai, thus identifying the islands beyond any doubt.

We have seen, then, that the more developed types of dragon robes, which were worn in China from early in the XVIIIth century, although they featured the dragons as symbols of the Ch'ing Dynasty, always had as their fundamental pattern the Universe in microcosm, with Land, Sea, and Sky. We have noted also that K'un-lun Shan, the Chinese equivalent of Mount Meru, which generally represented the land, was sometimes replaced by P'êng-lai (with or without its adjacent isles) to depict a specific part of the Universe rather than the Universe in general, as a symbol of Eternal Life.

<sup>22</sup> *Shih chi*, 118 (biography of Prince Li of Huai-nan), p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Pictured in *Costumes from the Forbidden City*, Fig. 26. Its details were vividly described by Lindsay Hughes in the *Gazette des Beux Arts* (*op. cit.* pp. 133-5).

<sup>24</sup> This same robe was exhibited at the Burlington House International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London, in 1935-6, with the singularly inappropriate name of “The Birthday Robe.”

## ON THE AESTHETIC ATTITUDE IN ROMANESQUE ART

BY MEYER SCHAPIRO (U.S.A.)

**C**RITICS of modern culture, for a hundred years already, have contrasted the place of art in our own society with its rôle in the Middle Ages. In the latter, they suppose, it was an essential part of social life, while to-day art is a "mere ornament," without utility or high spiritual ends. This judgment of the inorganic character of modern art rests on a narrow, simplified conception of the nature of art and of how art functions to-day. Lacking sympathy for modern art, these critics can hardly be expected to serve as guides to its qualities and aims. One could easily show that contemporary art, although unreligious—and precisely because unreligious,—is bound up with modern experiences and ideals no less actively than the old art with the life of its time. This does not mean that if you admire modern works, you must also accept modern social institutions as good—much of the best art of our day is, on the contrary, strongly critical of contemporary life; in the same way, admiration of mediaeval art does not require that we accept feudalism as an ideal human order or the legends and dogmas represented in the church sculptures as true beliefs. What concerns us here, however, is not the defense of modern art, but rather the inquiry into the common view that mediaeval art was strictly religious and symbolical, submitted to collective aims, and wholly free from the aestheticism and individualism of our age. I shall try to show that by the XIth and XIIth centuries there had emerged in western Europe within church art a new sphere of artistic creation without religious content, and imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in colour and movement and the expression of feeling, that anticipate modern art. This new art, on the margins of the religious work, was accompanied by a conscious taste of the spectators for the beauty of workmanship, materials and artistic devices, apart from the religious meanings. That such attitudes and qualities existed in the Latin and vernacular poetry of that time is well-known; the aestheticism of troubador poems does not have to be pointed out. But the parallel aims of the contemporary sculptors and painters are less familiar to students of the Middle Ages.

It is true, of course, that mediaeval art was closely connected with religion, and we must reject the idea that Christian art was simply secular art in the service of the Church. That may hold of most religious art to-day, but in the Middle Ages it was in the projects of the Church and in the attempt to solve artistic problems arising from religious aims and viewpoints, that mediaeval artists created certain of their most original and imposing forms. Yet it must be said that within so highly organized an institution as mediaeval Christianity, it is often hard to distinguish between religious and secular aims. The Church was not simply a religious organ, outside material affairs. It claimed a temporal power and was subject to all the solicitations of social and economic development and the changing forms of community life. As a great landholder possessing, it has been estimated, almost one third of the landed property in France, the Church exercised feudal authority over vassals and serfs, and its bishops carried arms, made war, and engaged openly in the political struggles of the time. Like the kings and nobles of the same feudal

world, the high dignitaries of the Church assumed a corresponding style of life, whatever their spiritual duties within the system of feudal relations.

On a lower social level, too, material conditions affected the established religious forms, either by provoking reactions against the power and corruptness of the clergy or by proposing new religious ideals, more in accord with the needs of secular life. The urban development, the social relationships arising from the new strength of the merchants and artisans as a class, suggested new themes and outlooks to religious thought and thereby helped to transform religious art, even while the framework of Christianity remained broadly the same. Originating within these lower strata, the artists and often the lower clergy were more open to the secular currents of their time.

But the relationship of religion and art is independent of the question whether the artists themselves were laymen or monks. The style of Louis XV, in the wonderfully refined and elegant rococo objects of that manner, whether buildings, furniture, textiles, porcelain or sculpture and painting, instantly conveys to us the quintessence of the aristocratic spirit of that moment; yet much of this was created by artisans, who lived another life than their patrons and had other ideals. At least, it was not their own thoughts and outlook that they wished to express, but the thoughts and outlook of the dominant group which could scarcely produce such works. In a similar way, the creation of mediaeval art did not require deeply religious artists, but rather artists who had been formed within a stable religious milieu, and whose craft had been developed in tasks set by the Church. They grasped intuitively its requirements of expression and were selected accordingly by the bishops and abbots. Giotto, the author of a great cycle of Franciscan paintings in Florence, indeed the artist often admired (perhaps mistakenly) as the one who made the final and perfect statement of the Franciscan content, was critical of Franciscan ideals and the life of the order; the single literary work of his that has come down is an attack on Franciscanism. Hegel said very justly that in an age of piety one does not have to be religious in order to create a truly religious work of art, whereas to-day the most deeply pious artist is incapable of producing it. This discrepancy between the personal religious aim and the present condition of art was expressed in another way by Van Gogh, a man of passionate Christian insight, when he wrote that one could not paint the old religious subjects in an Impressionist style.

The widespread idea that mediaeval art was the work of monks or of profoundly religious lay artisans inspired by a humble attitude of selfless craftsmanship and service to the Church rests on the assumption that this art is through and through religious and that the people of the Middle Ages esteemed art only as it was useful, devotional and directly imbued with spiritual conceptions in accord with the traditional teachings of the Church. The monuments and the writings, especially of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries, tell us otherwise.

In the buildings there is an enormous quantity of elements which, from a religious-didactic and structural viewpoint, are entirely useless. It would be unnecessary to labour this point, which is evident enough from the profusion of ornament in mediaeval churches. But the vicissitudes of taste and theory of art have blinded many students to the significance of all that decoration. Two centuries ago, mediaeval architecture, and especially the Gothic, was judged to be inartistic because of the extraordinary caprice and irrationality of its forms, the multiplied details that could not be justified by any practical norm. A hundred years later, this view was converted into its opposite: Gothic was held up as the paragon of a completely functional art. In the opinion of the Catholic convert,

Pugin, and the free-thinking rationalist architect, Viollet-le-Duc, every element in the stone fabric of the Gothic cathedral, even the ribs, shafts, mouldings, pinnacles, gargoyles, crockets, etc., was structurally necessary. Gothic architecture thus became the model of a functional style and the notion that the greatest, most deeply stirring architecture created in the western world was of this kind helped to stimulate the growth of a modern secular style closely allied to engineering, and of which two of the basic tenets were, remarkably enough, the elimination of all ornament and the abandonment of stone as a building material. Even the Catholic Church has been sympathetic to this new mode; a recent writer, a canon of the Church, has recommended the new architecture of reinforced concrete as most in accord with the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and as the only possible style for the Church to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Modern scientific study of construction has refuted that conception of Gothic. The inspired technological interpretation of Viollet-de-Duc now appears to be mechanically incorrect. The Gothic church does not form, as he supposed, an ideal system of equilibrium, in which the thrusts of self-adjusting vaults are transmitted by the ribs to the flying arches and thence to the outer buttresses which are poised through the weight of the pinnacles. The building is an aesthetic creation and parts once declared to be constructive are now seen to be expressive and ornamental.<sup>2</sup>

But even if his theory were acceptable for the core of the structure, there would remain in the mediaeval buildings much that could not be derived from constructive or religious intentions. A simple example is the variety of capitals in the Romanesque arcade. This is no "organic" variety, for the members can obviously be interchanged without affecting the stability or general appearance of the building. These varied members of a common series have identical functions. In a Greek temple, they would be undistinguishable, like the Doric columns or capitals of the Parthenon. But the Romanesque artist thought it better to individualize the parts, regardless of their functional identity. In certain works this variation seems to be occasioned by a didactic aim; the capitals are sculptured with different incidents from the life of Christ or the saints or the figures of the Old Testament. But only a small fraction of capitals are historiated, and such variety occurs still earlier in foliate and animal capitals and in regions, like Normandy and Belgium, where religious themes are rarely applied to these members.

The fact, moreover, that the variation often appears on bases and on the pillars themselves, and even on the barely visible modillions under the high cornices, shows how deeply rooted is this tendency of the artists which goes beyond the requirements of a fixed religious programme of didactic or symbolic imagery.

It might be asked whether we do not exaggerate the aesthetic significance of such variation; perhaps it is simply a by-product of a piecemeal method of work, each mason or sculptor having particular capitals to carve in his own way, unconcerned with the total effect and unhampered by the paper designs of an architect regulating all the details in advance. Even then it would be significant to us as a fruitful instance of liberty of individual conception such as we meet only rarely in the corresponding members in classical buildings; and we would ask in turn whether this is not also the training ground

<sup>1</sup> G. Arnaud d'Agnel, *L'art religieux moderne*, Grenoble, 1936, 2 volumes. See also *Review of Religion*, New York, May, 1939, pp. 468-473.

<sup>2</sup> See Pol Abraham, *Viollet-le-Duc et le rationalisme médiéval*, Paris, 1934, and the discussion by various writers in the *Bulletin de l'office international des Instituts d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, Paris, II, 1935. Several German writers, notably Gall and Frankl, had insisted before on the expressive and plastic aspect of the Gothic forms, although they accepted the older constructive interpretation of the developed ribs.

of the audacious authors of the great Romanesque tympana who were so original and personal in their designs. I shall cite, however, one text, among many, which conveys the enthusiasm of contemporaries for this kind of variation, their awareness of it as an aesthetic accomplishment pervading the whole of a work. It is a passage from a chronicle of the abbots of St. Trond, near Liège, and concerns the abbot Wiricus in 1169.

"So much care did the industrious architect devote to the decoration of the monastery that every one in our land agrees that it surpasses the most magnificent palaces by its varied workmanship (*operosa varietate*). Tastefully and artfully he inserted distinct alternating courses of white and black stone and beautified the entire structure of the chapel in an extraordinary manner on the interior and exterior by an original revêtement of black and speckled columns with finely polished bases and sculptured capitals of a wonderful variety. By the beauty of the work he gave immortality to the author of the enterprise."<sup>3</sup>

This variety occurs equally in an art that is no work of hired artisans, but a domestic product of the most pious groups, the illumination of religious manuscripts. Besides the miniatures which illustrate a religious text and in which we discern a connection with doctrine and rite, there are innumerable initials of a fantastic nature, elaborations which smother or lose the initial form in entanglements with a complex play of human figures, beasts and vegetation, often aggressive and brutal and suggesting a masochistic preoccupation of the author. It is characteristic of this engrossing art that the ornament of the initial, proliferating freely, not only oversteps the boundaries of the letter, but also has in most cases no apparent connection with the meaning of the text. Here, as in the capitals in the buildings, the same element, an initial letter, assumes a different form and a different decorative filling, highly spontaneous, in each recurrent example.

Was this thought perhaps inspired by an underlying Christian conception of human individuality, expressed through the uniqueness of the forms of members in a common group?

It is an attractive idea, although difficult to test. But we are forced to reject or at least to qualify it because such individualization is rare or undeveloped in Christian architecture before the Romanesque period and is more marked in the Romanesque than in the Gothic style; it precedes by some centuries the scholastic ideas about form as a principle of individuation in living creatures. In the interiors of churches of the XIIIth century, there is a greater uniformity of parts, an approach to the Renaissance, at the expense of that exuberant fantasy which delights us in Romanesque art. If the fantasy persists in Gothic exteriors, these are more secular in spirit and are addressed to the outer world, to the man in the streets and the market square, the active civil community which was, I believe, the ultimate ground of the growth of individuality in the Middle Ages.

An important testimony of the XIIth century allows us to grasp the essentially aesthetic and secular moment in these Romanesque carvings and their individuation of members. It is the often-quoted diatribe of saint Bernard against the Cluniac art of his time, in a letter to the abbot William of St. Thierry.

"In the cloister," he writes, "under the eyes of the brethren who read there, what profit is there in those ridiculous monsters, in that marvellous and deformed beauty, in that beautiful deformity? To what purpose are those unclean apes, those fierce lions,

<sup>3</sup> See Victor Mortet and Paul Deschamps, *Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture et la condition des architectes en France au moyen âge, XIIe-XIIIe siècles*, Paris, 1929, p. 12.

those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those striped tigers, those fighting knights, those hunters winding their horns? Many bodies are there seen under one head, or again, many heads to a single body. Here is a four-footed beast with a serpent's tail; there, a fish with a beast's head. Here again the forepart of a horse trails half a goat behind it, or a horned beast bears the hind-quarters of a horse. In short, so many and so marvellous are the varieties of shapes on every hand, that we are more tempted to read in the marble than in our books, and to spend the whole day wondering at these things rather than in meditating the law of God. For God's sake, if men are not ashamed of these follies, why at least do they not shrink from the expense?"<sup>4</sup>

The whole of this letter calls for a careful study; every sentence is charged with meanings that open up perspectives of the Romanesque world. We can consider here only a few points that belong more intimately to this paper.

It should be noted first of all that in his powerful criticism of the cloister sculptures, Bernard does not attack religious art, but profane images of an unbridled, often irrational fantasy, themes of force in which he admits only a satisfaction of idle curiosity. He cannot be answered by the argument of iconodules that man as an imperfect creature requires the tangible image of Christ and the saints in order to reach them in spirit. These cloister sculptures are wholly without didactic meaning or religious symbolism. If the physically demonic is an essential part of their repertoire, the monsters are not regarded by Bernard as symbols of evil; nor is there reason to suppose that the sculptors conceived them deliberately as such.

On the contrary, the new art is condemned precisely because it is unreligious and an example of a pagan life-attitude which will ultimately compete with the Christian, an attitude of spontaneous enjoyment and curiosity about the world, expressed through images that stir the senses and the profane imagination. This artistic tendency was latent even among the Cistercians in the heroic period of the foundation of the order, when it was most subject to the double discipline of ascetic piety and hard work. We can understand that the monks and lay brethren who were active in draining swamps, clearing forests and building dams, and who wrote admiringly of their great technical enterprises, their canals and water-power, should despise the useless arts of decoration. Hence the puritanical tone, both moralizing and functionalist, in Bernard's letter which terminates with regrets for the vain expense of labour and gold. Yet in one of the earliest monuments of Cistercian art, made in the decade before Bernard's spiritual influence, the great manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory on Job in the library of Dijon, the initial letters are painted with remarkable images of everyday life, the monks at work, cutting trees, threshing wheat, preparing wool, etc., but also with a wild involvement of monstrous aggressive beasts and human figures that would surely have aroused the indignation of the saint.<sup>5</sup> These spirited, fascinating pictures, entirely independent of the accompanying text, are astoundingly modern in their freedom of conception and precise drawing, rich in finely observed details, perhaps the first observations of their kind in mediaeval art. It is the appeal of such works that Bernard and the later Cistercians condemned as "curiosity."

"Curiositates" and "curiosum" are most frequent terms in the polemic against

<sup>4</sup> See Migne, *Patrologia latina*, CLXXXII, cols. 914-916, and V. Mortet, *Recueil de textes, XIe-XIIe siècles*, 1911, pp. 366-370 for the entire text. I borrow here, with a few changes, the translation of G. Coulton, *Life in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed., New York, 1935, IV, pp. 174 ff.

<sup>5</sup> They are reproduced by C. Oursel, *La miniature du XIIe siècle à l'abbaye de Cîteaux d'après les manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Dijon*, Dijon, 1926, plates XXII-XXIX.



art at this time ; they recur in the Rules of the Cistercians and Carthusians, and in the next century among the Dominicans and Franciscans, with a monotonous regularity.<sup>6</sup> These criticisms and prohibitions, which were enforced by inspectors who were empowered to remove the offending works from the churches and the buildings of the monks, give us to understand what such images meant to the contemporaries who enjoyed them. Sometimes the monks resisted the condemnation of these objects ; in the abbey of Vicogne, near Valenciennes, they defended their paintings with some violence and the visits of inspection had to be dropped.<sup>7</sup> "Beautiful pictures," says the Cistercian in a litany of the arts in the famous dialogue with a Cluniac monk, "varied sculptures, both adorned with gold, beautiful and precious cloths, beautiful weavings of varied colour, beautiful and precious windows, sapphire glass, gold-embroidered copes and chasubles, golden and jewelled chalices, gold letters in books : all these are not required for practical needs, but for the concupiscence of the eyes."<sup>8</sup>

Bernard concedes at one point in his letter that the beauties of art might be justified in the cathedrals if not in the monasteries, since they served to attract the people whose devotion is excited more by material than by spiritual ornaments. But even this concession will not stand. The beautiful objects, wherever found in a church, are finally a distraction from worship and an un-Christian indulgence and extravagance. "They attract the worshipper's gaze and hinder his attention. . . . They are admired more than holiness is venerated. . . . The funds for the needy are consumed for the pleasure of the eyes of the rich. The curious find things to amuse them, but the poor find no relief."

Bernard is aware also of the sacred and didactic aspect of the imagery of the church, but with cunning rhetoric he observes it overtly only in the pavements where holy figures are trodden under foot. "Often they spit on the face of an angel, often the passers by step on the faces of saints. If you do not spare these sacred images, why not at least spare the precious colours ? Why beautify what must soon be fouled ? Why decorate what will have to be stepped on ? Of what good are these beautiful forms in places where they are continually spoiled by dirt ?"

A surprising solicitude for the arts in a monk who, in his own words, has abandoned all the beauties and delights of the senses for the sake of Christ and regards them as dung.

Yet, recalling the monstrous sculptures of the cloisters, we are impressed by the fact that although Bernard condemns these works as meaningless and wasteful, he has written so vivid an inventory of their subjects and characterized them with such precision ; every theme he mentions may be found in surviving Romanesque churches and cloisters. The saint has perused these capitals no less attentively than have the monks whom he reproaches for meditating the sculptures instead of the Bible or the Fathers. Only a mind deeply drawn to such things could recall them so fully ; and only a mind with some affinity to their forms could apply to these carvings the paradoxical phrase : "that marvellous deformed beauty, that beautiful deformity (*mira quaedam deformis formositas ac formosa deformitas*)," which resembles in its chiasmic, antithetic pattern a typical

<sup>6</sup> See Mortet and Deschamps, *XIIe-XIIIe*, p. 38 (Cistercians), 265 (Carthusians), 247 (Dominicans), 236, 286 (Franciscans). On curiosity as the lowest step of the ladder of pride, see Bernard, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, Migne, P. L., CLXXXII, col. 941 ff., where he treats curiosity at greater length than any of the other steps of pride. See also Bernard's *Liber de modo bene vivendi*, on curiosity as a dangerous presumption which provokes heresy and sacrilege.—In the same period, the Carthusian prior-general, Guigo, speaks of the aesthetic attitude as psychologically harmful : "those beauties and worldly (*forenses*) graces quickly enervate the man and render the masculine heart effeminate" (Mortet and Deschamps, p. 40).

<sup>7</sup> Mortet and Deschamps, *op. cit.*, p. 214. See also pp. 36-38 for statutes ordering removal or destruction of particular works of art in other monasteries of the order.

<sup>8</sup> See Martene and Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, Paris, 1717, V, col. 1584.

design of Romanesque art.<sup>9</sup> The concept of a beautiful deformity reminds one of the unclassical aesthetics of the XIXth century, of Baudelaire and Rodin; but this juggling phrase should not be interpreted in a modern sense or even as an attempt of Bernard to define a Romanesque aesthetic. More likely, it is a justification of Bernard's hostility to these works as belonging to an inferior order of the beautiful and reproduces a thought of his beloved Augustine that "there is a beauty of form in all creatures, but in comparison with the beauty of man, the beauty of the ape is called deformity."<sup>10</sup> This reminiscence of the early father accounts, perhaps, for the inception of Bernard's list of the cloister sculptures with "the unclean apes."

No doubt Bernard was intensely fascinated by these useless and spiritually dangerous works. Ordinarily he turned his eyes away from the distractions of art and could not remember the simplest details of his surroundings. His biographer records some examples of this remarkable indifference. "He had spent a whole year in a novice's cell without knowing, when he left, whether the house had a vaulted ceiling. He had often frequented the church, going in and out, and yet he supposed that there was but one window in the chevet, which really had three. Having mortified his sense of curiosity, he had no perceptions of this kind; or, if by chance he happened to see something, his memory, occupied with other things, did not advert to it. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

He remembered, however, with a surprising fullness the details of cloister decoration. We may interpret this psychologically by supposing that Bernard responded with excitement to images of living creatures as kindred to his own feelings, but was cold to the lifeless geometrical forms of windows and vaults. This would agree with his hostility to the dialectic of Abelard and to all systematic theologizing of faith. He is a man of passion rather than reason who transposes an enormous energy of desire into love of Christ and His virgin mother. When he attacks the art of the cloisters, he is reacting against the concupiscence of his own eyes and the irrationality of his own impulses. Bernard's writings are rich in figures of movement and life; he appeals constantly to metaphors of sensory delight for religious expression: "Jesus is honey on my lips, melody in my ears, jubilation in my heart."<sup>12</sup> He loves striking contrasts, violent and astounding oppositions, the monstrous-grotesque, the antithetic and inverted. Thinking of his double life as monk and statesman of Christendom, he called himself: "the chimera of my age."<sup>13</sup> The great heretic, Arnold of Brescia, he characterized with the fantasy of a Romanesque *imagier*: "head of a dove, tail of a scorpion."<sup>14</sup> And when he had to speak of his own religious order, he imagined the Cistercians as acrobats and

\* I have analyzed examples of this form in Moissac (*Art Bulletin*, XIII, 1931, pp. 473 ff.), Silos (*ibid.*, XXI, 1939, p. 347) and Souillac (*Mediaeval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter*, Cambridge, Mass., 1939, pp. 359 ff.).

<sup>10</sup> See his *De natura boni*, Migne, P.L., XLII, col. 555, cap. xiv. Augustine in other passages speaks of beauty in antithetic terms, e.g., in *De civitate Dei*, XI, 18, where God is an artist who employs antitheses of good and evil to form the beauty of the universe, and in *De ordine*, I, 2 (Migne, P.L., XXXII, col. 979), where beauty is a compound of opposites, including ugliness and disorder. On his aesthetic ideas, see K. Svoboda, *L'esthétique de Saint Augustin et ses sources*. Brno, 1933.

It is interesting that at the same moment as Bernard's letter, an English writer, William of Malmesbury, independently (I imagine) addresses Christ as an artist who is able to give form to our deformities: tu, Domine Jhesu, . . . bone artifex, multumque potens formare nostra deformia . . ." (*Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, V, 251, ed. N. E. Hamilton, London, 1870, p. 403).

<sup>11</sup> Migne, P. L., CLXXV, col. 238; Mortet and Deschamps, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 24.

<sup>12</sup> *Sermo in Cantica*, XV, 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Epistola*, 250: "clamat ad vos mea monstruosa vita, mea aerumnosa conscientia. Ego enim quaedam chimaera mei seculi, nec clericum gero, nec laicum." In an earlier letter he says of his great opponent Abelard: "sine regula monachus . . . nec ordinem tenet, nec tenetur ab ordine. Homo sibi dissimilis est, intus Herodes, foris Joannes; totus ambiguus . . ." (*Ep.* 193).

<sup>14</sup> *Ep.* 196.

jongleurs of the spirit who provide a most beautiful spectacle to the angels, although they incur the contempt of the proud and worldly. "All that they (*i.e.* the worldly) desire, we, on the contrary flee, and that which they flee, we desire, like those jugglers and dancers, who, with head down and feet up, in an inhuman fashion, stand or walk on their hands and attract the eyes of everyone."<sup>15</sup>

This is an authentic image from Romanesque art. How often on the portals of southern and western France are there carved just such figures juxtaposed to holy personages—acrobats and dancers among fantastic beasts! They occur in liturgical manuscripts too, in tropers and breviaries, and in other religious books.<sup>16</sup> The elders of the Apocalypse who appear beside them with their viols or zithers acquire from this proximity a profane connotation; we are led to wonder if they too have not been chosen because of their appeal as virtuosi of music.

The sculptures that Bernard denounced so fervently, unrolling their vanity and monstrosity, are a considerable field of Romanesque art. What he rejects is no particular work or school, but a widespread, essential tendency manifest in thousands of examples that still survive. At one time, scholars thought to win these sculptures for the unity of religious art by discerning a hidden theological or moral symbolism in their grotesque, profane types. Bernard's letter discredits such an approach, although in certain works the context allows us to suppose that they were conceived in a symbolic mode. But is it right to call the others "purely decorative" because they have no religious sense? Are the religious and the ornamental the only alternatives of artistic purpose? Apart from the elements of folklore and popular belief in some of these fantastic types, they are a world of projected emotions, psychologically significant images of force, play, aggressiveness, anxiety, self-torment and fear, embodied in the powerful forms of instinct-driven creatures, twisted, struggling, entangled, confronted and superposed. Unlike the religious symbols, they are submitted to no fixed teaching or body of doctrine. We cannot imagine that they were commissioned by an abbot or bishop as part of a didactic programme. They invite no systematic intellectual apprehension, but are grasped as individual, often irrational fantasies, as single thoughts and sensations. These grotesques and animal combats stand midway between ancient and modern art in their individualized, yet marginal character, as feudalism occupies a place between ancient and modern society. The Romanesque initial or capital does not exist fully in itself, like a modern work; it belongs to a larger whole of the building or the book. But neither is it rigidly subservient in meaning or form to the whole of which it is a part, like old Asiatic and Greek ornament. The initial is often unframed or breaks through its frame and encroaches on the adjacent parts. Itself a part, it has a special, pronounced physiognomic and completeness, its own axis and expression.

Very little that is comparable to this aspect of Romanesque art exists in the Byzantine church. A letter like Bernard's is inconceivable in the East. And the fact of this difference illuminates the western peculiarity and development. Imagery has a different status in the two Christianities: in Byzantium, created for worship, whether defined as veneration or homage; in the West, since the *Libri Carolini*, officially restricted to decoration and instruction, whatever the popular or clerical trends towards an image-cult. Hence the church imagery in the East can hardly admit types which are so secular in spirit; the image as such is already an object of cult and is therefore submitted more

<sup>15</sup> *Ep.* 87, 12.

<sup>16</sup> For examples, see *Art Bulletin*, XXXI, 1939, pp. 339 ff.

responding sensibility. They do not inform us about the deeper content of fantasy or feeling provoked by the contemplation of art, but they convey the spectator's excitement and fascination as an experience of its own kind, sometimes so intense as to recall descriptions of religious ecstasy.

There is such a document in the history of the bishops of Le Mans in an extended account of the constructions of the bishop William in his episcopal manor towards 1158. He built himself a private chamber, finely illuminated by windows of which "the workmanship surpassed the quality of the materials; their execution and the arrangement of the room were a proof of the artist's ingenuity which they reflected in a beautiful and subtle way. Next to this room and continuous with it he constructed a chapel; and if this chapel was beautifully resplendent as a work of architecture, the pictures painted on its walls, conforming expressly, with an admirable skill, to the appearances of living creatures, held enrapt not only the eyes of the spectators, but also their minds, and so attracted their attention that in their delight with the images they forgot their own business; those for whom tasks were waiting, were so entranced by the paintings that they seemed almost idlers. On a third site, beside the chapel, he built a chamber of which the entire composition (and especially the windows) was so beautiful that it seemed to have been designed by a more skilful artist than the other two constructions; or one might suppose that the same artist had surpassed himself in this new work. Moreover, below, on the sites of houses that he had purchased, the bishop set out a garden with exotic fruit trees; they were also beautiful to the eye, so that men looking out from the windows of the building and others standing in the garden might delight in the mutual aspect, those in the building enjoying the beauty of the trees, those in the garden, the view of the beauty of the windows."<sup>19</sup>

This text is one of the most precious we have. It combines in a single description so many sides of the experience of art in that time: the appreciation of the architect and his craft, the love of light and of fine fenestration, the response to painting as a rapture that takes the beholder away from his normal cares; finally, the deliberate planning of views in buildings and gardens for the eye's delight. All these are common interests in the XIIth century and could be documented by other texts. There is the famous account of his new church of St. Denis by Suger, in which the abbot proudly tells how the enchantment of the beautiful building, with its incomparable treasure of precious stones, disposes him to a high mood of spiritual contemplation.<sup>20</sup> But more often the experience of the decoration of the church is described as a pure ecstasy without religious content or consequence. An English writer, William of Malmesbury, employs as a formula of artistic power this rapture of the eyes and heart. "In the multicoloured paintings an admirable art ravished the heart by the alluring splendour of the colours and drew all eyes to the ceilings by the charm of its beauty."<sup>21</sup> That is how he conveys the effect of the pictures in Lanfranc's new cathedral of Canterbury; the language reminds us of a great modern critic, Fromentin, on a painting by Rubens: "Elle charme l'esprit, parce qu'elle ravit les yeux; pour un peintre, la peinture est sans prix." But in the same passage, William, speaking of the other half of the ornaments of the cathedral, the cloths and sacred vestments, knows only the skill of the craftsmen, "surpassing the precious-

<sup>19</sup> Mortet, *Recueil, XIe-XIIe siècles*, p. 166, for the Latin text.

<sup>20</sup> *De Rebus in Administratione sua gestis*, XXXIII, now admirably translated and edited by Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, Princeton, 1946, pp. 62 ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 43, pp. 69, 70; a similar passage on Tewkesbury abbey, IV, 157, p. 295. (Cf. also the same writer's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, II, 10, on Roman art.)

ness of the materials"—a distinction which anticipates the future divergence of the status of artisanship and fine art.

But whether paintings or jewels or textiles, they call out alike the same admiration for their surface qualities. In these statements of the XIIth century we are struck by the intense enthusiasm for colour, light, lustrousness and rich contrast, an enthusiasm incredible to-day, since the old buildings have lost, for the most part, the objects that evoked this sentiment. The great treasures of gold and silver vessels, often jewelled, the glowing windows and the deeply coloured textiles that hung from the walls, have disappeared; for us the art of that time emerges chiefly in the naked stone and its carvings. When William of Malmesbury describes the church of Rochester, the stone pillars and walls fall away; we see only a blaze of coloured lights. The bishop Ernulf, he says, rebuilt the church "with such splendour that nothing like it could be seen in England for the luminosity of the glass windows, the glistening marble pavement, the multicoloured pictures."<sup>22</sup> In similar terms, another monk of Malmesbury, in a poem on the abbot Faricius of Abingdon, praises the radiance of his new building:

"He transferred to the inside all the church's splendor;  
The pomp of beauty glistens throughout the golden ceilings;  
Metallic shell, gemmed fabric, inspiring wonder."<sup>23</sup>

Without these texts, we could scarcely conceive the original quality of the buildings and the dazzling spectacle that the church offered to the eyes of the people. The aesthetic appeal of the precious substances of high reflecting power or translucence is something elementary and instantaneous and, for the naive beholder, independent of spiritualistic notions on the affinities of light and the divine nature. The secular rulers of the Middle Ages, whether in the West or in Byzantium, in the Christian world or the Moslem, never failed to exploit this attractive power of gold and jewels in order to overwhelm the rustic and provincial or the foreign envoys. The church aspired to be a model of the divine palace, the heavenly Jerusalem, which mediaeval poets saw as an architecture of gold and jewels.<sup>24</sup>

There were other visions of the church beside this one of jewels and light. Certain minds, disposed to hidden meanings and symbolism, interpreted every part of the building in a mystical or allegorical sense. But the greater mass of statements about new churches by chroniclers, travellers and hagiographers is free from such interpretation. Instead, they dwell on the beautiful construction, the preciousness of the materials, the decorative carvings, the wonderful life-likeness and variety of the images. The same terms: *pulcherrimum*, *subtilissimum*, *splendidum*, *mirum*, *mirificum*, *decus*, recur throughout this literature in the mention of buildings. There is, however, also a perception of form, by writers of a more modern sensibility to architecture, who feel the space and proportions and the beauty of the masonry. The author of the *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago* concludes his detailed account of the interior structure of the church of Compostela with these words: "In this church you will find no crack or defect. It is marvellously wrought. Large, spacious, clear, suitable in size, well-proportioned in

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 88, p. 193.

<sup>24</sup> For a fine example see the sequence for the feast of Mary Magdalene by the XIth century poet Hermannus Contractus, beginning "Exsurgat totus almpionus"; Clemens Blume, "Sequentiae ineditae, Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters," in *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 9te Folge, vol. 44, 1904, p. 205; on the church building as a model of the heavenly Jerusalem, cf. also the contemporary prologue to book III of Theophilus Rogerus, *Schedula diversarum artium*,—there is an English translation by G. Coulton, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 194 ff.

breadth, length and height, it is considered a wonderful and ineffable work, which is even built in two storeys, like a royal palace. Whoever walks through the upper galleries, if sad when he ascended, becomes happy and joyful at the sight of the exceeding beauty of the temple."<sup>25</sup>

The effect of architectural beauty upon feeling, its refreshment of the eye and the spirit, is more commonly noted in descriptions of refectories, chapter-houses, and the private chambers of bishops and abbots, that is, in buildings not destined for worship. I mentioned before an example in the manorial buildings of the bishop of Le Mans. There is another in the history of the abbots of St. Trond which was quoted earlier in this article. "The abbot built a very beautiful room where the provost of the church enjoyed himself in the company of his friends and where he reckoned the budget for the brothers of the monastery. Above it, the abbot laid the foundations for a higher building where he himself was to dwell and to rest; and putting his whole mind to the job, he distinguished this house by its wonderfully fine workmanship. For he constructed in it large and airy windows that provided a long vista to anyone standing in the house, and offered to the beholder's eyes a full view of almost half the city. And this building, which was completely and marvellously perfected by the architect's ingenious art, he enhanced further with a fireplace and a system of water supply flowing through the middle of the chamber."<sup>26</sup> The combination of advanced equipment, comfort, beauty and the delights of air and outdoor perspectives is scarcely monastic in spirit; it pertains to secular architecture in the modern sense and entails a new aesthetic viewpoint.

A century later, the author of the history of the abbots of Auxerre justified this extravagance by its contribution to human well-being. "Since the joyous beauty of buildings sustains and refreshes the bodies of men and delights and comforts the heart, the abbot John built in the monastery for himself and his successors a most beautiful hall with galleries above the court. From it one can see the entrances of the abbey and almost all its buildings and enjoy the loveliness of the atmosphere."<sup>27</sup>

Writers of the XIIth century condemned such constructions as an un-Christian luxury and display. Hugo of Fouilloi singled out in his criticism the bedroom of a bishop with paintings of pagan themes, the Homeric tales and classic myths.<sup>28</sup> The perfection of these buildings was not for the glory of God, nor was it required by the functions of the Church. The chronicler of St. Bertin, writing towards 1180, makes this unequivocally clear; of a new refectory in his abbey he says: "It is like a mirror and an ornament, yet considering its great cost, it is more beautiful than useful."<sup>29</sup>

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Nothing in our culture has seemed to its critics so evident a sign of decadence as the taste of artists for works of different times and places and the miscellaneous collecting of objects of many styles. Both have been contrasted with the closed character of mediaeval taste, which was free from exoticism. Yet there is in western art from the VIIth to the XIIIth century an immense receptivity matched in few cultures before that time or even later; early Christian, Byzantine, Sassanian, Coptic, Syrian, Roman, Moslem,

<sup>25</sup> Mortet, *Recueil, XIe-XIIe siècles*, pp. 400, 401, and now the edition with French translation by Jeanne Viellard, *Le guide du Pèlerin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle*, Mâcon, 1938, pp. 90 ff.

<sup>26</sup> Mortet and Deschamps, *Recueil, XIIe-XIIIe siècles*, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76. See also Mortet, *XIe-XIIe siècles*, p. 95 for an earlier construction of a bishop's palace (c. 1116-1136) with a loggia and a beautiful view.

<sup>28</sup> Mortet and Deschamps, *Recueil, XIIe-XIIIe siècles*, p. 92.

<sup>29</sup> Mortet, *Recueil, XIe-XIIe siècles*, p. 122.



Celtic and pagan Germanic forms were borrowed then, often without regard to their context and meaning. A great part of research has been occupied with this process of incorporation of foreign motifs in mediaeval art; it is too well known to require an extensive list of examples. But I shall cite two striking signs of the prevalent curiosity about non-Christian arts. One is the taste for classical gems, of which many have been preserved in mediaeval church treasures and on reliquaries and the covers of liturgical manuscripts. The abbot or craftsman who inserted an antique engraved jewel in a sacred object rarely asked what the carving meant; it was enough that the stone was precious, that it sparkled wonderfully with luminous colour and was cut in a mysterious way on an incredibly minute scale to represent with exactness the form of a beautiful human being, whatever its pagan significance. If the figure suggested a Christian type, so much the better; but this was an exceptional, fortunate chance.<sup>30</sup>

The second evidence is the frequent practice of western artists—in stone, wood, enamel and paint—to reproduce bits of Arabic writing as an ornament on the borders of their own works, without consulting the possibly un-Christian sense of these inscriptions. They were excerpted from Moslem objects, mainly textiles and ivories, on which the Cufic letters form either an inscribed text, often with invocations of Allah, or a stylized, repeated pattern of the *lam* and *alif* of the holy name. Such pseudo-Cufic writing occurs on the impost of a capital in the cloister of Moissac, on a wooden door of a church in Le Puy and in the Beatus manuscript from St. Sever.

Not only small details, but complete objects of Saracenic origin were adopted for Christian works at a time when the two peoples were bitter enemies. In the *Liber Miraculorum Sanctae Fidis* it is told that the local count, Raymond II of Rouergue (961-1010), presented to the monks of Ste. Foy in Conques a Saracen saddle, which was admired as a work of incomparable fineness. According to the contemporary author, no native goldsmith could equal it in skill and knowledge; it was incorporated in its totality (*salva integritate*) in a silver cross<sup>31</sup> for the church, like the ancient engraved gems of which I have spoken.

The same admiration for the Moslem's art obtained among the Byzantines, who also reproduced as ornament the forms of Cufic writing. The booty brought from conquered Crete to the imperial capital in the Xth century, the textiles and precious objects displayed in triumph, were praised as marvels of the highest art by the Greek chronicler.<sup>32</sup>

This is a common sentiment among the mediaevals in face with the workmanship of neighbouring and distant peoples. Reading such texts, we are less astounded by Dürer's admiration for the primitive American objects that he saw in Antwerp in 1520.<sup>33</sup> The treasures of the great churches were once immensely rich in accumulations of exotic handicraft, like the cabinets of modern collectors.

The literature of the XIIIth century also abounds in passages concerning the beauty

<sup>30</sup> For examples of such preservation of classic carved gems in the Middle Ages and their Christian interpretation, see E. Babelon, *Guide illustré du Cabinet des médailles*, Paris, 1900, p. 61 (no. 2101), amethyst bust of Caracalla inscribed O PETROS in Greek in the Middle Ages, and preserved on the cover of an evangeliary in the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris; p. 85 (no. 1), sardonyx from Chartres; p. 96 (no. 42), sardonyx of Venus, nude, regarded as the Virgin Mary—from a mediaeval reliquary arm; p. 102 (no. 98), sardonyx, with Sacrifice to Priapus, from the Châsse of the Virgin's shirt in the cathedral of Chartres; p. 104 (no. 120) agate, with the goddess Roma, from the cover of an evangeliary in the church of St. Castor in Koblenz; etc.

<sup>31</sup> *Liber Miraculorum S. Fidis*, I, 12, ed., Bouillet, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> Leo Diaconus, *Historia*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca*, CXVII, col. 699.

<sup>33</sup> "In all my life, I had never seen things that delighted my heart as much as these. For I saw among them wonderful artistic objects and I marvelled at the subtle ingenuity of the men in foreign lands. Yes, I can hardly say enough about the things that I had before me."—*Dürers Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime*, übersetzt von Moriz Thausing, Vienna, 1872, p. 90.

and artistic superiority of the older native arts, of styles which had long before been replaced. The text of Reginald of Durham concerning the vestments of saint Cuthbert is an example. Equally interesting is his appreciation of the wooden coffin of the saint, a work that modern students believe to be of the end of the VIIth century ; it is decorated with incised forms of a style much less cultivated than the art of Reginald's time. Seeing its surface of black oak, he speculates whether this blackness is due to age or to artifice or is the natural colour of the wood. But concerning the quality of the carvings he has no doubts ; they are of a minute and subtle workmanship that fills him with amazement and that he can hardly credit to the knowledge or skill of the artist.<sup>34</sup>

In his readiness to admire the ancient objects, there is surely an element of religious feeling. Everything that belongs to the venerated relics—the wrappings, the coffin, the metal objects—is touched with the virtue of the saint, which manifests itself in these material things in their beauty of substance, their artifice and patterns. We detect also an antiquarian piety, an absorbing interest in the fact of antiquity itself, which is shown in the repeated observations on the evidences of time, the changes effected by the passage of the centuries. On the ivory comb he remarks that “ its natural appearance of white bone is changed by its great age into a reddish tint.”<sup>35</sup> But the inclination to exalt the secondary human works that have enclosed or accompanied the sacred body remains, however, an example of the aesthetic viewpoint we are considering, for it is applied to ornament, artistic skill and imagination. The author of the description of the coffin ignores the content of the images ; he does not even record the incised Latin names ; the forms and surfaces impress him more than the meaning of the religious figures which are still visible in the wood to-day.

A similar attitude appears in judgments of old architecture, even of the pagans. Remains of classical antiquity were standing throughout western Europe in greater number than to-day, and Christians of the XIIth century could hardly be indifferent to them. By their strange unused presence they invited fantastic interpretation, taking their place in the web of folklore and magical belief, or they evoked the curiosity and admiration of artists who saw in these works the hand of the craftsman and the force of a powerful will. The same William of Malmesbury described “ the wonderful constructions of the Romans ” in the ruined walls of York, and he remembered in Carlisle “ a triclinium vaulted in stone, which had never been shaken by any storm.” Of the finely preserved buildings at Hexham, he wrote, that there was nothing comparable on this side of the Alps ; “ those coming from Rome, who see Hexham, swear that they see the walls of Rome.”<sup>36</sup>

The small objects of Roman art excavated from time to time called out a similar emotion. The chronicle of St. Peter's at Oudenburg, near Bruges, composed toward 1084, speaking of the fortifications of the abbey built of materials from different sites, including Roman remains from the region of Cologne, remarks on the ancient objects discovered in these classic sites : “ Very beautiful and shapely vases, cups, dishes and other utensils, cleverly fashioned and sculptured by the ancients, have been found there recently ; these could scarcely be formed and sculptured so elegantly to-day by clever artists in gold and silver.”<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 90 ; on the wooden coffin, see G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, London, 1921, V, pp. 397 ff.

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>36</sup> *Gesta Pontificum*, III, 99, 117, pp. 208, 255.

<sup>37</sup> Mortet, *Recueil, XIe-XIIe siècles*, p. 172. Cf. also in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum*, II, 6, the description of an onyx vase, carved with highly realistic figures in a landscape ; it was a gift of the German ruler Henry I to Athelstan (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CLXXIX, col. 1102).

By this time, the sculptors were beginning to copy details of classic ornament and to observe the pagan statues as models for their own art. They were preceded by the writers who studied Ovid and Virgil as masters for imitation in poems of a profane content, and read the Roman theoreticians of prose and verse for rules of art.

This is not the place to consider the deeper reasons for the responsiveness to classic art. It is enough perhaps to say that if in the IXth century it was promoted by the political aims of the northern rulers who wished to assume the rôle of the Roman emperors, and if in later centuries the consciousness of Roman antiquity was intensified by the ambitions of empire, the conflicts between papacy and state and by the strivings for a secular culture in the growing urban society, the interest in the ancient remains supported an aesthetic attitude. During the Romanesque period a distinction was already made between the worth of a pagan sculpture as a finely proportioned object with intrinsic aesthetic value, and its unacceptable religious sense. The French abbot, Guibert of Nogent (1053-1124), could write then in his autobiography: "We praise the rightness of proportion in an idol of any material, and although, where faith is concerned, an idol is called a thing of naught by the apostle (I Cor. viii, 4), nor could anything be imagined more profane, yet the true modelling of its members is not unreasonably commended."<sup>38</sup> A contemporary bishop, Hildebert of Le Mans, regretting the ruins of pagan Rome, expressed the same judgment with less reservation:

"What faces have these divinities! They are worshipped rather for  
Their makers' skill than for their godliness."<sup>39</sup>

Dante, in describing the region of the Proud in Purgatory (Canto X), conceives of the sinners and their punishment in an elaborate and beautiful artistic metaphor, in which the contrasts of mediaeval and classical styles and the various levels of reality in art and nature supply the terms. He beholds first a bank of pure white marble adorned with sculptures "which put to shame not only Polykleitos, but nature itself." These sculptures are of ideal figures of Humility, beginning with the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation; "the angel before us appeared so veraciously carved there in gentle mien that it seemed not an image which is dumb." Dante was aware, no doubt, of the ancient definition of sculpture as a mute poetry, but he plays here also on the theme of the speaking angel rendered in stone. This marvellous power of representation of reality is then discovered in a still more amazing form in the singing choir in a relief of King David humbly dancing before the Ark; this sculpture, addressed to both ear and eye, made the first say, "no," the other, "yes, they do sing." Dante comes then to the proud who, in contrast to the humble with their ideal forms and harmonious erect postures like beautiful classic statues, are described as uncertain, bent, agonizing creatures, struggling to support great burdens of stone. They recall to him in their unhappy servitude the crouching corbel figures in mediaeval churches who carry a ceiling or roof, joining knees to breast in a posture which "though unreal begets real discomfort in him who sees it."<sup>40</sup>

This original expression of insight into opposed styles has its forerunners in the XIIth century, although none approaches the depth of Dante. Confronted by the surviving works of different lands and ages in literature and art and occupied constantly with

<sup>38</sup> Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CLVI, col. 840 (I, 2); and the translation in the Broadway series: *The Autobiography of Guibert*, tr. by C. C. S. Bland, London, 1925, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CLXXI, col. 1409 (De Roma); the entire poem is quoted by William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, IV, 2.

<sup>40</sup> I quote for the most part the translation by T. Okey, in the Temple Classics edition, pp. 118 ff.

tradition, good minds were bound to observe the varying styles and to reflect upon them. The chronicler speaks of a church as being in the Roman or the native mode. The novelty of style of building in the historically crucial moments of architectural invention was often remarked.

William of Malmesbury, discussing the works of Aldhelm who wrote in a precious, ornate style some four hundred years before, defends his admiration for his hero by reminding the importunate, but ignorant critics that "the styles of writing vary according to the customs of peoples. For the Greeks are wont to write in an involved way, the Romans with splendour, the English pompously. . . ." But Aldhelm knows how to unite all these: "if you read him thoroughly, you will think him a Greek for his acumen, you will swear he is a Roman for his brilliance, you will know he is English from his pomp."<sup>41</sup>

Through such comparisons and the experiences of taste in different lands, mediaeval writers came to recognize the relative aspect of aesthetic judgments, even if they admitted that the beautiful resides in properties of the admired object. The philosopher and physicist Witelo, who travelled much and was interested in the sciences of several peoples, Arabs, Greeks, and his European contemporaries, could not help remarking the variations of taste. His aesthetics, sometimes quoted as an evidence of the ideas and tastes of the Christian West in the XIIIth century, is for the most part a literal translation of an earlier writer, Alhazen. But after repeating the Arabic scholar's examples of particular beautiful objects and appearances (the heavenly bodies, almond-shaped eyes, the sphere and the cylinder, a green meadow, the textures of various cloths, the symmetry and variety of the human form, distant views), he adds that custom and personal inclination affect aesthetic judgment: Moors and Danes prefer other colourings and proportions of the human body and the German taste lies between theirs.<sup>42</sup> Yet, just as the West, divided into opposing philosophical camps, could appreciate the philosophies of Arabs, Jews and ancient Greeks in which might be found solutions of problems actual to mediaeval European thought, so foreign artistic forms were judged and adopted with a considerable latitude.<sup>43</sup>

By the XIIth century historians were concerned enough with the differences between various periods in their arts to specify them concretely through comparison of corresponding parts of works of the same type, much as a modern student of art. Gervase of Canterbury, in his unusually full account of the building of the new cathedral of Canterbury after 1175, not only reports the progress of the work step by step, the decisions and plans and method of construction, but he enters into a lengthy description of the previous buildings, the Saxon church which he knew only from old accounts and perhaps a drawn plan, the Romanesque church of Lanfranc and his successor which he had seen himself; the latter especially he compares with the new structure in plan, proportions, vaulting and decoration in a manner which surprises us by its anticipation of the modern literature on mediaeval building.<sup>44</sup> He avows that such a verbal account, addressed to the mind, is less clear and less delectable than would be a direct experience of the forms. But he writes "In order that the difference between the new building and the old might be

<sup>41</sup> *Gesta Pontificum*, V, 196, p. 344.

<sup>42</sup> See Clemens Baeumker, *Witelo, ein Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII, Jahrhunderts*, 1908, p. 175, for the Latin text, pp. 203, 204, 639, on its relation to Alhazen.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. the corresponding appreciation of early Gothic art from France by the Mongol rulers of Central Asia, recently studied by Leonardo Olschki, *Guillaume Boucher, a French artist at the Court of the Khans*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1946, pp. 26-28.

<sup>44</sup> For the text, see Mortet, *Recueil, XIe-XIIe siècles*, pp. 206-228.

recognized," although the latter has been destroyed. And he describes the earlier choir of Conrad to preserve "the memory of so great a man and so splendid a work."

Gervase's account appeals to us most of all, however, because it is the first report of a mediaeval building in which the architect appears as a living power, a creative personality whose existence is fatefully bound up with his work. In the earlier narratives of building enterprise the abbot or bishop was the hero. The monks of Canterbury invite architects from England and France to submit their ideas for the repair of their church which has been ruined by fire. These architects disagree, and the monks despair of seeing the church reconstructed during their own lifetime by any human skill. They choose finally a foreigner, the Frenchman William of Sens. He has carefully examined the ruined building in the company of the monks, and with great astuteness, by his tact and long silence and by his cogent reasoning, he has won the monks to his plan. He is a man of extraordinary ability, energetic and ingenious, gifted as designer, organizer and craftsman. He makes drawings or models for the stone-cutters to follow; he prepares a programme for successive stages of the building campaign; he moves about on the high scaffold supervising the great enterprise. And one day he falls and is grievously hurt. He tries to continue the supervision from his bed, directing the work through a young monk whom he has chosen for his industry and intelligence. But this is too difficult. The local doctors are unable to help him. He returns to France a sick man, and his rôle is given to another William.

From this early account of an architect at work one fact is important to retain for the understanding of the growth of an autonomous artistic taste: a foreigner was called to design the most important cathedral in England, the seat of the primate of the country. Sometimes artists were lacking in a town or region and one had to look for them abroad. Seventy-five years before, Hildebert of Le Mans wrote to the English king for artists he could not find at home.<sup>45</sup> But this was hardly the case in Canterbury in 1175. Then it was a sign rather that architecture was an art of invention and individual power, and not simply a craft with fixed rules of practice. In spite of the local schools and traditions and the barriers created by language, customs and the relative isolation of communities in feudal society, the universal character of art was sufficiently recognized to permit such invitation of foreigners in great domestic projects of building, and even the competitive selection of an architect. Building workers, sculptors, craftsmen were accustomed then to long journeys and carried their observations and inventions with them, helping in this way to diffuse styles from one region to another on their route. The authorities charged with the task of rebuilding, the men who originated the projects, accepted the work of foreigners and even solicited their help. Every student knows the passage in Suger's account of his building of St. Denis, in which he tells how he called together artists from different parts of Europe. The study of the sculptures and windows, in revealing elements from various regional styles, confirms his statement. In the next century the architect Villard de Honnecourt, who worked on the cathedral of Cambrai, served also as a master in Hungary. Around 1400 at the cathedral of Milan, German, French, Italian and Flemish architects were consulted by the council of the fabric of the Duomo.

In this religious society, the respect for the artist sometimes outweighed fundamental religious rules. If a Renaissance prince or prelate was said to have protected an errant monk or layman because he was an artist, so did a Romanesque bishop. At Le Mans

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Hildebert, contrary to his promise, supported an architect-monk, John, who had abandoned his monastery and vows. The abbot protested and importuned the bishop continually, until in despair he excommunicated the errant monk.<sup>46</sup> This is the same Hildebert who wrote with pathos of the grandeur of the Roman ruins and the beautiful faces of pagan statues.

We are not surprised then that so many mediaeval artists signed their works in spite of their humble social status as artisans, often inscribing their names prominently on church portals in a manner unknown to classical art. In some inscriptions the name is followed by a verse or phrase which celebrates the artist's power and fame. The Romanesque sculptor of the door of the chapter-house of the cathedral of Toulouse signs himself: *Gilabertus vir non incertus*. The meaning of *non incertus* here is of a calculated ambiguity; the artist is not only "renowned," but also a "sure" master. He applies to his "mechanical" art the same term that the leading contemporary vernacular poet of his region, the first of the troubadors, William of Aquitaine, employs for himself: "*Maistre certa*."<sup>47</sup> In Italy since the early XIIth century the sculptors are glorified in inscriptions beside their works as worthy of the highest honour and fame.

Reading these texts, we sense that we are in a European world that begins to resemble our own in the attitude to art and to artists. There is rapture, discrimination, collection; the adoration of the masterpiece and recognition of the great artist personality; the habitual judgment of works without reference to meanings or to use; the acceptance of the beautiful as a field with special laws, values and even morality.

To all these evidences of the value assigned in the Middle Ages to the visual as an experience independent of religious content or utility and the standards of local practice, might be added in confirmation the writings of scholastic philosophers. The beautiful, according to Thomas Aquinas, is what gives pleasure to the eye, a doctrine which is not far from the too easily maligned aesthetic of Gautier and Wilde. This pleasure, he goes on to say, is due to the completeness, proportions and colour of the object. Nothing is said here of expression, character, ideality of content, or of a metaphysical communication through a symbolic language of forms. Nevertheless, I shall not appeal to this testimony of the philosopher, which is less pertinent to mediaeval art than is commonly believed. The formula of Thomas concerns natural beauty, the physical charm of men and women and animals and plants. When he speaks of art, he has nothing to say about the beautiful; art is for him skilled work of any kind, whether of the carpenter or logician or surgeon, and its perfection lies in the achievement of a practical end. The modern concept of fine art, which we have seen emerging in the Middle Ages, is apparently unknown to him. The beautiful is not artistic, but natural, and the work of art is not beautiful, but useful. If Bonaventure remarks on the beauty of a work of art in the aesthetic sense, he scarcely undertakes to explore very far its grounds and problems. But even if we accepted Thomas' definition of the beautiful as adequate to painting, sculpture and architecture—and some modern writers have claimed for scholasticism a complete aesthetic applicable to all art, including the art of our own time—it can hardly be adduced for the interpretation of mediaeval art. It is exceedingly doubtful that Thomas had in mind the art of the cathedrals when he defined the beautiful; is there a single large church that satisfies his rationalistic definition? Does Chartres cathedral,

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292-294.

<sup>47</sup> Poem VI, 36, ed. Jeanroy. On the relationship of Romanesque art of Southern France and troubador poetry, see *Art Bulletin*, XXI, 1939, p. 347.



with its Romanesque façade surmounted by one Romanesque spire and by a second in filigree, flamboyant Gothic, with its early Gothic nave, Romanesque crypt, late Gothic choir screen, and glass windows of many different generations, does this amalgam of forms possess "*integritas*" and "*due proportion*"? And what shall we say of Reims cathedral and Notre Dame in Paris of which the exteriors without spires are incomplete and the original proportions indeterminate? These are extreme examples, but the fact that mediaeval art is full of such incongruities, accidental and designed, and can tolerate the unfinished and the partial, points to a fundamentally different conception of the beautiful in art than the ancient. Even that "*claritas*" which is equated sometimes with radiance, sometimes with bright, sweet or fresh colour, according to whether a metaphysical or empirical attitude presides over the context, can be applied only with difficulty to the discrimination of the beautiful in mediaeval colour. All three criteria of Thomas come ultimately from the classical definitions of the beauty of natural creatures, above all, of man, and designate the perfection of a fixed type with a definite structure and proportioning of limbs and a certain characteristic colouring. Whenever we encounter such terms in mediaeval writing about art, we suspect that the author has read the classical writings or their Christian commentators. How shall we apply these criteria to Romanesque sculpture, so rich in distorted bodies, interlacings and unnatural proportions? Several canons of the human figure exist in this art, even within the same work. And if the requirements of this classical-scholastic theory of the beautiful are transformed into a more subtle view of the internally coherent, expressive unity of an imaginative work, individual and independent of the canons of natural beauty, the criteria of Thomas become still more difficult to apply, especially to an art like the Romanesque in which there are often no fixed boundaries—I have in mind the unframed, freely projecting imagery of the margins of buildings and manuscripts.

No, the aesthetic of Thomas is inadequate to characterize or judge the beauty of mediaeval art; and his theory of art, on the other hand, admirable as an account of what is involved in fabrication in general, offers little to an understanding of the mediaeval work designed for aesthetic, expressive ends. He does not know or seem to know that there is a making that aims at beauty and expression. From other parts of his writing—his account of being and becoming, of form and substance, of the potential and actual, and his social ideas—one can derive perhaps some concepts for the ideological interpretation of mediaeval forms as a mode of seeing and composing inspired by a particular world view. But here Thomas becomes a witness or document of his time rather than a direct illumination. He himself nowhere hints at the connection of his metaphysics and contemporary art.

His classic definition of the beautiful remains a valuable sign. It points to or reflects the developing taste for nature and the curiosity about its forms, which are apparent already in the Gothic images of his time. But this recognition of the beautiful as an end or good in itself was well established in the Middle Ages long before Thomas, and was formulated more radically and more concretely by other writers with respect to works of fine art. The difference between the practical and the aesthetic in art is stated with a striking conciseness in the XIIIth century by a German theologian and polemist, Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1093-1169): "If a column is moved, the whole building is threatened with ruin. If a picture is destroyed, the eye of the beholder is exceedingly offended."<sup>48</sup> The value of the constructive member is therefore in the static function, the value of the

<sup>48</sup> Liber de aedificio Dei, Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CXIV, cols. 1242, 1243.

painting lies in the visual effect. This aesthetic conception of the painting as an object for the eye, contrary to the tradition of painting as mainly a vehicle of doctrine or Bible of the illiterate, had the powerful support of Augustine, who wrote in his commentary on the gospel of John some sentences which might serve as a slogan of the modern schools opposed to "literary" or symbolic painting. "When we see a beautiful script, it is not enough to praise the skill of the scribe for making the letters even and alike and beautiful; we must also read what he has signified to us through those letters. With pictures it is different. For when you have looked at a picture, you have seen it all and have praised it."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> In *Jcannis evangelium tractatus XXIV, 2*, Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, XXXV, col. 1593.

# LOS URTHONA AND BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATIONS TO DANTE

BY SHERMAN E. LEE (U.S.A.)

“ONE power alone makes a poet: Imagination, the Divine Vision.”<sup>1</sup> Thus wrote William Blake (1757-1827) in answer to Wordsworth’s “the powers requisite for the production of poetry are, first, those of observation and description . . . secondly, Sensibility.” Nowhere is the opposition of Blake and Modern Romanticism more clear.

While the “Age of Wordsworth” and London could not prevent the salvation of William Blake’s soul, they did effectively cloud his teaching and produce the first of many enthusiastic “interpreters” who even more effectively hid his metaphysics behind a curtain of literary romanticism. Blake was viewed as a romantic rebel, a madman, a scarce collector’s item and now, only recently, a true mystic who wrote exactly what he heard and drew exactly what he saw.

The word revolt is closely associated with the Romantic movement in Europe and England. Revolt against the academies, revolt against bourgeois standards and revolt against God was the fashion of the day. The word has also been associated with Blake<sup>2</sup> and he is grouped with others in revolt, especially because of his strictures against Reynolds and the Royal Academy<sup>3</sup> and his early “lyric poems” on which his contemporary fame as a poet rests. Such a view is too superficial. Blake revolted against Reynolds, not as a representative of the Academy, but as a representative, personally known and at hand, of the Renaissance and the Modern World. The ideal of Reynolds and his age, which is still basically the common ideal, was the “artist as a special kind of man”; while Blake taught the ideal of “every man a special kind of artist.” Indeed this is the reason for the continual use of the word art and artist in Blake’s writings. To a Romantic, Blake’s numerous pleas for art appear sympathetic. Unfortunately for such a reader Blake’s ideal is diametrically opposed to his own.

That Blake was a solitary cannot be denied. But that his aloneness was like that of a Dali or a Picasso can most certainly be denied. These latter men are removed from society only by the “uniqueness” of their personality. Actually they epitomize and paint the ideals of the world in which they live apart as special men. They are accepted, not rejected, by the intelligentsia. Blake has no company on earth. Where others profit by psychiatry and the recesses of the mind, he is inspired (literally given from without) and sees visions. These are two vastly different levels of reference.

Unfortunately for Blake he was outside, a stranger to his environment and to Tradition. Had he lived in a “primitive” or medieval society, he would have found his tools at hand and his technique prepared by others of identical talent before him. However, England at the turn of the XVIIIth century was scarcely the proper environment.

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1826 in the margin of Wordsworth’s *Poems* (1825), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Most particularly and to an impossible degree by Saurat, D., in *Blake and Modern Thought*, where the most incredible distortions of Blake’s thought appear. The most complete analysis on a mystic level is in Damon, S. F., *William Blake*, Boston and N.Y., 1929.

<sup>3</sup> Keynes, G. (ed.), *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, New York, 1927, pp. 970-1015.

One had one's choice between rationalism and romanticism, the practical and biting comments of a Hogarth or the vaporous and pleasant flatteries of a Reynolds. With only these at hand, Blake had to find a higher technique to materialize his vision and England had only Medieval Tomb sculpture plus the reproductions and copies of Michelangelo and Raphael to offer him. Because these men were Janus faced, at the end of the Medieval linear and intellectual tradition and at the beginning of the Modern painterly and aesthetic tradition, they offered Blake at least some of the tools he needed.<sup>4</sup> The rest was supplied by the engraver's craft. Had Blake known the drawing of a Duccio or a Giotto<sup>5</sup> I have no doubt that their technique would have suited him better. Blake continually searched for the means to draw his visions perfectly; and the variation of quality in his work can only be attributed to the inadequacy of his means. Such was his fate or fortune bereft of tradition in the England of his time.

Although bereft of the actual presence of a mystic and religious tradition, Blake was one with it in spirit. For he affirmed the truth and existence of the *Philosophia perennis* known through Inspiration or Poetic Genius.

"As all men are alike (tho' infinitely various), so all religions as all similars, have one source. The true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius."<sup>6</sup> Poetic Genius (Los-Urthona)<sup>7</sup> seen as being in conflict with Reason (*Urizen*); but not as an opposition of equals, a contest of light and dark. Rather it is a case of different levels with *Urizen* usurping the higher plane or zone of Urthona. For Blake the source of poetry or the Divine Vision is Poetic Genius, Imagination, Inspiration—all one and not merely human but more important, divine. Blake does not examine historical truth or fact. A "critical history" being a view of restricted types of Truth, would not interest him. It is not strange on this higher level that Milton, whose thought he considered heretical, appears in Blake, reborn and teaching Truth and not Heresy.<sup>8</sup> For Inspiration makes one see with the eyes of God (fig. 1) and such vision is the Truth. Where a Paine or a Marx, confronted by a problem, examines history and this factual world, Blake, with the Evangelists, seeks the answer in Inspiration<sup>9</sup> and that world of the Eternals. When his vision fails, for he was an imperfect contemplative, Blake becomes a copier of Medieval Tomb statuary and Michelangelo, a confused metaphysical poet and the epitome of rage and selfhood; but where the light breaks through to him he crystallizes it on paper in perfect and immediate form.

Influences are the delight of the critic and historian. By discerning them in the work of a painter or writer he magnifies his critical acumen and belittles the "originality" of the artist. The vice extends further for it allows the construction of elaborate mazes of "development and progress." While such a system of research may work with material on the same level it becomes ludicrous when applied to the products of a Blake or a Dante. For men everywhere, through Inspiration, may reach the *Primum Mobile* and they express that union in symbols of such universality as to be beyond the realm of influence.

"The orator whose sermon is not the expression of a private opinion or philosophy,

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wilenski, R. H., *English Painting*, N.Y., no date, p. 257 for comment on Blake's reliance on Michelangelo and Raphael as technique givers and his occasional failure as an artist when that was his *only* source.

<sup>5</sup> "Grecian is Mathematical Form; Gothic is Living Form. Mathematic Form is Eternal in the Reasoning Memory; Living Form is Eternal Existence," Blake in Keynes (*op. cit.*), p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> Poetic Genius is of course not to be confused with poetic genius such as Byron or Shelley.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. "The Four Zoas," "Milton" and "Jerusalem" in Keynes (*op. cit.*).

<sup>8</sup> Keynes (*op. cit.*), pp. 545, 546.

<sup>9</sup> See Santayana, G., *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*, N.Y., 1936, for a remarkable chapter on Inspiration in the Gospels and its validity as Truth.



FIG. 1—BLAKE WITH LOS STEPPING FROM THE SUN

The artist (Blake) with face turned away from the world toward Inspiration (Los-Urthona) whose origin is the Sun, Sphere and Fire. On a higher level: Soul turning to Deity through Inspiration

PLATE XXXVIII



FIG. 2.—PURGATORIO, CANTO XXXII, CHARIOT OF BEATRICE, BY BOTTICELLI



PLATE XXXIX



FIG. 3—PURGATORIO, CANTO XXIX AND XXX, CHARIOT OF BEATRICE, BY BLAKE

PLATE XL



FIG. 4—HELL, CANTO I, DANTE RUNNING FROM THE THREE BEASTS, BY BLAKE

PLATE XLI



FIG. 5—HELL, CANTO XVII, GERYON CARRYING VIRGIL AND DANTE, BY BLAKE

*Pages 152 - 153*

*Pages 152--153*



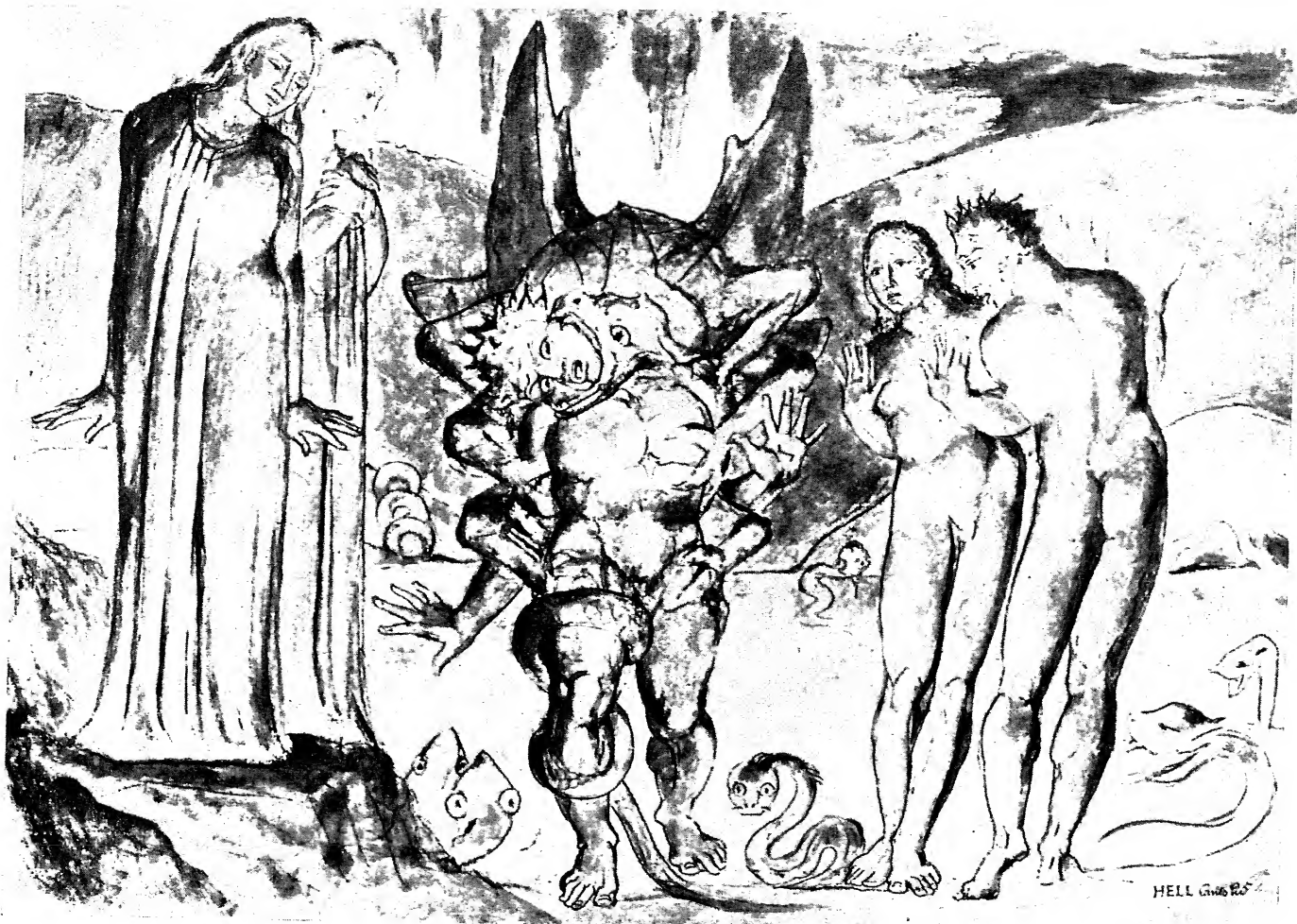


PLATE XLII

FIG. 6—HELL, CANTO XXV, THE SERPENT ATTACKING AGNOLO BRUNELLESCHI, BY BLAKE



PLATE XLIII

FIG. 7—HELL, CANTO XXV, BY BOTTICELLI

PLATE XLIV



FIG. 8—PURGATORY, CANTO XXVII, THE ANGEL INVITING DANTE INTO THE FLAMES, BY BLAKE



but the exposition of a traditional doctrine, is speaking with perfect freedom and originality; the doctrine is his, not as having invented it, but by conformation (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*).<sup>10</sup>

How else does one explain the recurring symbols of mystic experience in Blake and the Godly company? The famous quatrain,

"I give you the end of a golden string,  
Only wind it into a ball:  
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,  
Built in Jerusalem's wall."<sup>11</sup>

is a universal symbol known to the Rajput painter, to the Celtic craftsman, to Plato, and to Durer and Leonardo.

Blake deals with eternal truths in inspired symbols. Thus:

"Five windows light the caverned Man: thro' one he breathes the air;  
Thro' one hears music of the spheres: thro' one the eternal vine  
Flourishes, that he may receive the grapes; thro' one can look  
And see small portions of the eternal world that ever groweth;  
Thro' one himself pass out what time he please; but he will not  
For stolen joys are sweet and bread eaten in secret pleasant."<sup>12</sup>

And the "primitive":

"The Supreme Earthmaker sends down to men five beings to protect them from malignant powers and to *be their teacher* (italics mine), and that of these, only the fifth, the Hare—accomplishes the Hero's tasks."<sup>13</sup>

This is not invented but inspired imagery; like myth or gospel it is the imprint of God, the clay in the mould, the sculpture in the rock or the Being in the Tree.

"He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments and in stronger and better light than his perishing and mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all."<sup>14</sup>—Blake.

The writings and sayings of mystics readily attest to the clarity of certain visions, their explicitness, their absoluteness. This is especially true of the symbolic visions, filled with a wealth of detail. That Blake uses the word "lineaments" above is no surprise. The great religious painters of East and West have almost exclusively recorded their vision of truth and salvation with a bounding line of firmness and clarity. Indeed the making of an ikon or an illustration to a sacred text would be pointless were it *not* clear and explicit. The ikon is an aid to understanding. It can be no coincidence that the rise of material and emotional elements brings with it a recourse to painterly methods—the blurred edge, the atmospheric effect, the richness of stuff and texture. But when the artist's action is dictated by Inspiration or Vision it is as if another hand guides him. As Michelangelo said, the form is in the block, one needs only (!) to hew it out. The ikon

<sup>10</sup> Coomaraswamy, A., "Is Art a Superstition or a Way of Life," in the *American Review*, February, 1937.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. "Jerusalem" in Keynes (*op. cit.*), p. 703.

<sup>12</sup> "Europe, A Prophecy," in Keynes (*op. cit.*), p. 232. Note even in the images the preoccupation with the Divine: "music of the spheres," not a viol da gamba; "the eternal vine," not the pagan cup; "the eternal world," not hill and vale. See Damon (*op. cit.*) p. 102, who identifies The Fifth "sense" as Touch = Sex as a means to the eternal. The general and highest meaning is quite clear without this debatable identification.

<sup>13</sup> Radin, Paul, *The Road of Life and Death*, N.Y., 1945, as paraphrased by Coomaraswamy, A., "The Lady of the Hare"—a review, in *Psychiatry*, vol. 8, No. 4, Nov., 1945, p. 512.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from Blake by Wilenski (*op. cit.*), p. 249.

constant symbols emerge. The four Evangelists are seen in halos, disembodied, of no material world. The dancers whirl in a symbolic spiral. The griffon itself, being the dominant concept, dominates the composition and gives off rays of light that ornament its nature. The whole scene is presented, not as a narrative, but as an eternal moment miraculously transferred to paper. In short, like an ikon the scene is not meant to function biologically: it lives in a different world.

This quality is maintained, with little variation, throughout the series.<sup>26</sup> In the first Canto of Hell, where Botticelli sees Dante, confronted by the three beasts in a beautifully drawn forest, each in a succeeding moment, Blake rightly interprets the passage (fig. 4) beyond its meaning as description and shows the three beasts simultaneously confronting the poet (Soul in search of Salvation) and representing Worldly Pleasure (Leopard), Ambition (Lion) and Avarice (She-Wolf). Virgil appears through the air, he walks not on earth. The setting is not merely a forest but the primordial elements, Sun, Sky, Stars and Ocean, as in the text—"The time was the beginning of the morning; and the sun was mounting up with those stars, which were with him when Divine Love first moved those fair things."<sup>27</sup> Dante's pre-occupation with heavenly phenomena was not just scientific curiosity and Blake so understood him, while Botticelli did not.

The vision of Geryon (fig. 5) is an especially remarkable example of the understanding between the two poets. Geryon is more than a vehicle for the pilgrims, he is the means (Fraud) by which the soul moves downward from the relatively minor sins of violence, involving no conscious perversion of the will, to those grave iniquities involving prostitution of the will and mind. "His face was the face of a just man, so mild an aspect had it outwardly; and the rest was all a reptile's body."<sup>28</sup> He is the symbol of the depths to which the soul will sink in the final two circles of Hell. Blake fills the sheet with this form, hypocritical and loathly, a vision of the willfully perverted soul, half-human, half-serpent. Within these last depths of Hell, this symbol changes and we get the complete transformation of the soul to serpent in the figure of Angelo Brunelleschi.<sup>29</sup>

This drawing (fig. 6) reveals Blake and Dante at the height of their powers. For here is the ritual of "the casting of the slough" reversed,<sup>30</sup> with even the occupants of Hell utterly repelled by the Transmutation. The illustration literally follows the text, but picks out the significant act; not the recurrence of the act in various passages in the Canto as in Botticelli's page (fig. 7), but the act itself in all its awful meaning. The Florentine pictures the landscape of the circle as it is described in the text in a marvellously complex and complete narrative form. Blake shows the image of wilful, degraded Sin with a direct power that bears no relation to derived style.

The illustrations to *The Purgatory* are of a different world. The reader senses it immediately on turning from the last plate of Hell. Once more the symbols of hope appear in a pure atmosphere (fig. 8). The mood changes and the reader is not oppressed but elevated. The arms of the characters move up, the compositions are almost vertical rather than horizontal, and the Divine Symbols are clearly figured again:

<sup>26</sup> The drawings are now scattered among museums of the British Commonwealth: The National Gallery, The British Museum, The Ashmolean Museum, Gallery of Birmingham and the National Gallery, Melbourne. They can be adequately seen in reproduction in *Illustrations to The Divine Comedy by William Blake*, London, privately printed, 1922. Botticelli's drawings are all in the Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin and are reproduced in Lippman, F., *Zeichnungen von Sandro Botticelli zu Dante's Goetlicher Komödie*, Berlin, 1887.

<sup>27</sup> Carlyle-Wickstead translation of *The Divine Comedy*, N.Y., 1932.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, "Hell," Canto XVII.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, "Hell," Canto XXV, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Coomaraswamy, A., "On the Loathly Bride," in *Speculum*, Vol. XX, No. 4, Oct., 1945, p. 394.

PLATE XLV



FIG. 9.—PURGATORY, CANTO XXVII, THE ANGEL INVITING DANTE TO ENTER THE FIRE, BY BOTTICELLI

PLATE XLVI



FIG. 10—PARADISE, CANTO XXVI, ST. PETER, ST. JAMES, BEATRICE WITH ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, ALSO BY BLAKE

Sun, Sky, Stars, Ocean and Mountain. The artist's line becomes lighter and not so static.

With Botticelli (fig. 9) there is no change until the realm of Paradise and then austerity of composition accomplishes the change. There is no change in the draughtsman's line: he works within a personal style where Blake moves beyond his previous achievements. It is also noticeable that in Botticelli's drawing we are still in a landscape. The basic symbols of Purgatory, manifest in Dante and Blake, are absent.

Our contemporary fear of the contemplative life mirrored in our hectic lives leaves us with little sympathy or understanding for *The Paradiso*. But with Blake, Botticelli and Dante the obvious fact is that Union with the One, the Great Silence, is the end of the soul's pilgrimage. Consequently the illustrations must not be considered as less interesting because of their seeming emptiness but on the contrary, most expressive of the higher reaches of the cosmograph or *Mandala* that Dante called *The Divine Comedy*. It is doubtful indeed if the mystery of union, agreed upon by all mystics as ineffable, can be expressed by any art. But the stages of Paradise leading to this culmination are the subjects of the final illustrations. Here the artist is confronted by a terrific task. Botticelli shows plate after plate of Dante and Beatrice in various attitudes most satisfying visually but of little help with relation to the text. In the one Paradise plate we show of Blake (fig. 10) the form of his series is demonstrated. The nude body is continued as symbol but often enclosed by interlocking spheres, the traditional Platonic figures of the divine. Thus a unity is obtained between the organic forms of the lower world and the pure geometry in the realm of the One.

We cannot now go further in our introduction. Our purpose has been to indicate the true nature of Blake as Artist and to demonstrate this nature as revealed by his illustrations to Dante, the archetype of the Christian Poetic Genius. These last drawings of Blake's old age are, from any point of view, whether quantitative or qualitative, his *chef d'œuvre*, the triumph of Inspiration over style, technique and personality, under the spur of the great Medieval drama of salvation.



## MENDELÉYEV'S MOTHER

BY GEORGE SARTON (U.S.A.)

THE Periodic Law, one of the most illuminating generalizations in the development of chemistry, was discovered independently and at about the same time by the German, Lothar Meyer (1830-95), and the Russian, Dmítri Ivánovich Mendeléyev (1834-1907). Meyer was ahead of his Russian rival, but the latter was the first to elucidate the law, and he explained it more thoroughly. Mendeléyev was the first to state clearly that "the properties of the elements and the properties of their compounds vary periodically with the atomic weights of the elements." In spite of Mendeléyev's efforts and those of many theoreticians of chemistry, the Periodic System remained until our own days (say, from 1870 to 1913, almost half a century) puzzling and tantalizing. One felt that it revealed a part of the truth, but only a part. Moseley's discovery of 1913 transferred the emphasis from atomic weight to atomic number and then all the difficulties were removed and everything was clarified.<sup>1</sup>

A little more than a century ago Tobolsk, on the Ob River, was the main city of Western Siberia and a thriving town comparable in many ways to our Western cities in the same period. Among its Russian population were pioneers organizing the trades and industries; exiles, notably the Dekabrist<sup>2</sup>; soldiers, civil servants, educators. For example, the Kornílev family had originated the manufacture of paper and glass. The director of the Gymnasium, Iván Mendeléyev, became acquainted with a daughter of that family, Márya Dímítriyevna Kornílova, married her and had by her fourteen children, the last of whom was Dmítri Ivánovich, born in Tobolsk, 1834. She had been educated by Dekabrist<sup>2</sup> and was a woman of exceptional intelligence and resolution. After Dmítri's birth his father began to lose his eyesight because of a double cataract and was finally compelled to resign. The mother was obliged to support the family. She was ambitious for her youngest son and determined to take him to Russia, where he might obtain a higher education and fit himself for a medical career. They moved first to Moscow, then to St. Petersburg. Dmítri did not care for medicine and became, as we know, a chemist, one of the greatest of the last century.

He owed his success in the first place to his mother and never forgot it. When he was fifty-three years of age and already famous, he published a book entitled *Investigation on aqueous solutions according to specific gravity*,<sup>3</sup> which he dedicated to his Mother's memory. We reproduce the title-page and the dedication. The latter is written in a somewhat archaic and austere language. A literal translation<sup>4</sup> of it follows:

TO THE MEMORY OF MOTHER  
MÁRYA DIMITRIYEVNA MENDELÉYEVNA.

<sup>1</sup> G. Sarton: Moseley, the numbering of the elements (*Isis*, 9, 96-III, 1 pl., 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Or Decembrists. Conspirators for constitutional government at the time of the accession of Nicholas I, December, 1825. The leaders were executed, the rest exiled to Siberia.

<sup>3</sup> This is the translation of the Russian title, but the book bears also a French title a little more explicit reading: *Etude des dissolutions aqueuses fondée sur les changements de leurs poids spécifiques*.

<sup>4</sup> This translation is rough reading, but so is the Russian original; it is not idiomatic, but neither is the Russian.



Д. Менделѣевъ.

ИЗСЛѢДОВАНИЕ

ВОДНЫХЪ РАСТВОРОВЪ

ПО УДѢЛЬНОМУ ВѢСУ.



С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.  
Тип. В. Демакова, Новый пер., 7.  
1887.



*Памяти матери,  
Марьи Дмитриевны Менделеевой.*

*Это изслѣдованіе посвящается памяти матери ея послѣднимъ. Она могла его взростить только своимъ трудомъ, ведя заводское дѣло; воспитывала примѣромъ, исправляла любовь и, чтобы отдать наукѣ, вывезла изъ Сибири, тратя послѣднія средства и силы. Умирая завѣщала: избѣгать латынскаго самообольщенія, настаивать въ трудѣ, а не въ словахъ и терпѣливо искать божескую или научную правду, ибо понимала сколь часто диалектика обманываетъ, сколь многое еще должно узнать и какъ при помощи науки безъ насилія, любовно, но твердо устраняются предрасудки, неправда и ошибки, а достигаются: охрана добытой истины, свобода дальнѣйшаго развитія, общее благо и внутреннее благополучіе. Заветы матери считаетъ священными*

Окт. 1887.

*Д. Менделѣевъ.*

### MENDHLÉYEV'S MOTHER

This investigation is dedicated to the memory of Mother by her last offspring. She has been able to bring him up only by her work, by managing the industrial enterprise ; she educated by example, corrected by love, and—to give him to science—brought him out of Siberia, spending her last means and strength. When dying, she willed : to avoid Latin self-deception, to insist by work and not by words, and to seek patiently divine or scientific truth, because she understood how often dialectic deceives, how much still remains to be ascertained, and how—with the aid of science—prejudices, untruth, and errors are being removed lovingly and without force, while the preservation of obtained truth, the freedom of further development, the common good, and internal well-being are being achieved. The will of Mother is considered as sacred by

*October, 1887.*

D. MENDELÉYEV.

Whenever we evoke the discovery of the Periodic Law, we should think not only of Mendeléyev but also of his heroic mother, one of the greatest women of Siberia, Márya Dimítriyevna Mendeléyeva.

GEORGE SARTON.

## AL-GHAZZĀLĪ ON BEAUTY

BY RICHARD ETTINGHAUSEN (U.S.A.)

THERE are many vistas which A. K. Coomaraswamy has opened for us. One of them is the knowledge "that there is a Persian theory or philosophy of beauty that goes deeper than any mere appreciation of the exquisite."<sup>1</sup> There is still a great deal to be done before we shall be able to fully grasp the scope of this and other theories of beauty which are so important for our understanding of Persian art.

As a small contribution in this field, the following pages were written. They are nothing but a systematic digest of excerpts. However, the source used is so important that even these few references are significant for the understanding of the mediaeval attitude towards the beautiful as demonstrated by the writings of perhaps the most eminent Muslim theologian. The book in question is al-Ghazzālī's *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kīmīyā-i Sa'ādat*) written about 500 H. (A.D. 1106)<sup>2</sup>. The significance of this work lies not only in its ideas but also in the fact that these ideas were simply expressed. As al-Ghazzālī says himself, when he composed the *Alchemy* as a shortened version of his main work in Arabic, *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion* (*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*) he wrote it in Persian, that is in the vernacular language of his country, and without any difficult expressions or obscure and intricate trends of thought.<sup>3</sup> Therefore this book must have exercised a definite influence on the common people of Persia. Amongst these we should include the artisans and craftsmen; but their patrons and customers would have been equally affected by this work or by its more famous prototype. The range of the book was, of course, further increased when it was translated into other languages, such as Arabic, Turkish and Hindustani. However, it still has to be established to what extent the *Alchemy of Happiness* and other books of this type affected the reality of life and art. Other ideas might have had equal or even greater effect than these theological writings. Yet, their very existence is of great importance and should be taken into consideration in our evaluation of Muslim art.

In now turning to the actual writings of al-Ghazzālī we must make it clear from the outset that its author as a mystic could not have had a material interest in art. His main concerns were of a spiritual nature, and material conditions were usually considered only in so far as they were essential for the body, "the vehicle for the soul in its

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Coomaraswamy's review of E. Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art* (Cambridge, 1942), published in *The Art Bulletin*, XXV (1943), p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> I came across the various passages in *Al Ghazālī, Das Elixir der Glückseligkeit*. Aus den persischen und arabischen Quellen übertragen von H. Ritter (Jena, 1923). Since the Persian text of the original could not be found in any of the American libraries, and since the short version of the text in Arabic published in Cairo, in 1343 H. does not contain the pertinent passages, I had to rely mainly on Ritter's translation. I also used the English translations from the Turkish text by H.A. Homes (*The Alchemy of Happiness by Mohammed Al-Ghazzali* (Albany, 1873) and from the Hindustani text by C. Field (*The Alchemy of Happiness by Al-Ghazzali* (London, 1910). Ritter gives a short introduction to the book in his translation. Further information about the author and bibliography are to be found in B. D. Macdonald, "al-Ghazālī," *Encyclopaedia of Islām* (Leyden, London, 1927) II, pp. 146-49 and in N. A. Faris, "Al-Ghazzālī" in *The Arab Heritage*, ed. N. A. Faris (Princeton, 1944), pp. 142-58. For the approximate date of the book see C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Mss. in the British Museum* (London, 1879-83) II, p. 829b. Manuscripts of the *Kīmīyā-i Sa'ādat* are not common; Rieu's *Catalogue* lists only one copy (*op. cit.*, I, p. 37), others are given in C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Weimar, Berlin, 1898-1902) I, pp. 422-23, No. 29 and Supplement volume (Leiden, 1937-9) I, p. 750.

<sup>3</sup> Ritter, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

journey to the next world."<sup>4</sup> He thought, "there are only three material necessities: clothing, food and shelter,"<sup>5</sup> to which the weaver, the farmer, and the builder cater. It is only natural that the great theologian objected to an abundance of possessions, which "swallow up the whole time and energy of mortal man"<sup>6</sup> and yet are of no use on the day of his death. Of the many similes used by al-Ghazzālī to describe the relation of body and soul, and of spiritual and material values we need quote only the following:

"Like the camel of the pilgrim, so the body is like an animal upon which the 'heart' rides. The pilgrim has to feed and water the camel so that he may reach the end of the journey in safety. . . . But the attention bestowed by the pilgrim on his camel should be only in that proportion which is really necessary. If he should be busy with his camel day and night and should expend all his capital in feeding it, he would not reach his destination, but would ultimately become separated from his caravan, would lose all that he possessed . . . and ruin would ensue. . . . If man should thus pass all his day in attending to the preservation of the body and spend the capital of his life . . . he will not reach the mansions of felicity, but will wander in the wilderness of destruction. . . ."

There seems to be little hope that we will one day find a more elaborate statement on figural art in al-Ghazzālī's work. He must have objected to it from a theological point of view and therefore abstained from any closer preoccupation with it. This can be inferred from the following sentence which speaks of two classes of temporal values.

There are "those which run counter to the eternal values and (therefore) stand in their way; these are the ones against which the prophets and saints guarded themselves and against which they were commanded to guard themselves; and then there are those temporal values which do not stand in the way of the eternal values and from which these men did not abstain. . . . Whatever stands in the way of eternal salvation will be detested and not aspired to by the judicious person. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

However, while al-Ghazzālī does not seem to grant to art as such an active rôle within his religious system, he is fully aware of the significance of beauty and the beautiful. These topics are dealt with in connection with the investigations into the nature of love, a subject naturally of paramount importance for al-Ghazzālī, since he considers the loving of God as the final aim of all "stages."<sup>9</sup>

One of the basic, frequently paraphrased statements in his investigation is the one in which he speaks of the relationship between love and pleasure:

"Everything the perception of which gives pleasure and satisfaction is loved by the one who perceives it."<sup>10</sup>

Or the idea is expressed in reverse:

"That something is loved means that there exists an inclination toward it . . . and that it gives pleasure."<sup>11</sup>

With this given premise it is natural that al-Ghazzālī should draw the conclusion that everything beautiful will be loved, because it gives pleasure. As will be seen later, beauty is concomitant with perfection. When he explains that as the result of his self-love, the human being wants to surround himself only with perfect things, he also gives us a clue to man's insistence on having beautiful objects around himself.

<sup>4</sup> Field, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Homes, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>8</sup> Ritter, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

"The foremost object of love to every living being is his own self and *ego*. This self-love represents the urge to keep one's own existence and an aversion to seeing it suppressed and destroyed. . . . This is why the human being loves the preservation of his life and dreads non-existence, i.e. death and being killed. . . . Just as the preservation of one's own existence is loved, so also its perfection is loved, because being imperfect means that something is missing from perfection or is non-existent with regard to it. And non-existence is just as much hated when it comes to perfection as it is in the case of existence, while the existence of the properties of perfection are as much loved as existence itself. . . ."

Self-love is extended not only to one's children, family and friends, but also to one's own property. The reason for this is that—

"property is a means for the preservation and perfection of existence. It is thus with all things which serve this purpose; they are not loved for their own sake, but because they are linked with the preservation and the perfection of one's existence."<sup>12</sup>

Al-Ghazzālī furthermore gives us another angle to the love of beauty which is not a derivative of self-love, but exists for the sake of beauty itself:

" . . . Another cause of love is that one loves something for its own sake and not for a benefit one hopes to get through it (as in the case of the love for a benefactor), but rather because the object of love in itself represents the desired aim. This is the great and genuine love, on whose duration one can build. To this category belongs the love of beauty . . . because the perception of beauty is pleasure in itself and is loved for its own sake and not for anything else. Do not believe that love of beautiful forms is conceivable only for the satisfaction of sensual desire. The satisfaction of such a desire is another type of pleasure for which beautiful forms can also be loved. However, the perception of pure beauty gives also pleasure and can be loved for its own sake alone. How can this be denied? A green meadow and running water are loved although one does not drink the water, eat the grass nor even gain any advantage from it beyond looking at it. The Prophet also derived pleasure from green meadows and running water. The reaction of every healthy constitution (towards nature) proves that the contemplation of flowers and birds of a beautiful colour, graceful design and form gives pleasure. On seeing them even worry and grief leave the human mind, though there is no benefit to be derived beyond the mere looking. These objects give pleasure and everything pleasurable is loved. The perception of all beauty ever produces pleasure and no man will deny that beauty of nature is loved."<sup>13</sup>

Directly from this train of thought the author goes on to show that God's beauty leads one to love Him:

"By proving that God is beautiful, He must by necessity be loved by him to whom His beauty and majesty is revealed. The Messenger of God says: 'God is beautiful and He loves the beautiful'."

Al-Ghazzālī argues against the opinion that—

"beauty is restricted to that which can be seen with the eye or that it applies solely to the harmony of the human body and the beautiful colouring of the face. After all one says: 'This is beautiful writing, this is a beautiful voice, this is a beautiful horse' or 'this is a beautiful garment and this is a beautiful vessel' . . . In all of these instances we distinguish between beautiful and ugly"<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47, see also pp. 64 and 158.



and yet they are not the human figure nor are they recognizable alone with the help of the human eye.

Al-Ghazzālī then goes on to find the common denominator for the various types of beauty in the different examples which he has cited at random. He does not want to make this into a philosophical investigation of the whole question, since this would lead too far from "the discussion of active life" with which alone al-Ghazzālī wants to deal. But he gives at least the quintessence of his thoughts in stating that :

"the beauty of a thing lies in the appearance of that perfection which is realizable and in accord with its nature. When all possible traits of perfection appear in an object, it represents the highest stage of beauty ; when only part of them occur, it has that measure of beauty which appears in the realized degree of perfection. The beautiful horse is that which combines everything that is characteristic of a horse with regard to appearance, body, colour, beautiful movement and tractability ; a beautiful writing combines everything that is characteristic of writing, such as harmony of the letters, their correct relation to each other, right sequence and beautiful arrangement. There is a characteristic perfection for each thing, the opposite of which could under special circumstances be characteristic for something else. The beauty of each object lies just in its characteristic perfection. Man is not beautiful for that which constitutes the beauty of the horse, writing not for that which makes the beauty of the voice and vessels not for that which represents the beauty of the garments and so on."<sup>15</sup>

Apart from the values of beauty that can be perceived with our five senses al-Ghazzālī refers to those of a sixth sense, the "soul" (also called the "spirit," the "heart," the "reason," the "light"<sup>16</sup>) which perceives the beauty of the inner world, that is the spiritual, moral and religious values. In many places the author of the *Alchemy of Happiness* brings out the contrast between the beauty of the outer and that of the inner world, which is more perfect and greater :

"... The beauty of the outer form which is seen with the bodily eye, can be experienced even by children and animals, ... while the beauty of the inner form can only be perceived by the eye of the 'heart' and the light of inner vision of man alone."<sup>17</sup>

"The inner vision is stronger than the outer one, the 'heart' keener in perception than the eye and the beauty of the objects perceived with the 'reason' is greater than the beauty of outer forms which present themselves to the eye. Hence the pleasure of the 'heart' over the exalted, divine objects which it sees and which are too lofty to be perceived by the senses must necessarily be more perfect and greater, and the inclination of sound disposition and reason toward them must be stronger."<sup>18</sup>

"He who lacks the inner vision cannot perceive the inner form and he cannot derive pleasure from it, love it and incline toward it. However, he who appreciates the inner values more than the outer senses, loves the inner values more than the outer ones. There is a great difference between him who loves the painted picture on the wall on account of the beauty of its outer form and him who loves a prophet on account of the beauty of his inner form."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24 and 143. See Cairo ed. of Arabic text, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.

This last sentence gives al-Ghazzālī's evaluation of the love of art based merely on sense-perception.

At best the love of the outer world, the "world of appearances," is morally indifferent, since it is "a natural love, a mere urge of the soul"<sup>20</sup> even to be found in a person who does not believe in God. At its worst, it is objectionable; this is the case when an objectionable purpose is connected with this love and when it aims at the satisfaction of a forbidden desire.<sup>21</sup> However, the concept of the vision of the inner beauty introduces a new vista of beauty—and with it of art—which satisfies even the strict theologian in al-Ghazzālī:

"The beautiful work of an author, the beautiful poem of a poet, the beautiful painting of a painter or the building of an architect reveal also the inner beauty of these men."

What the inner beauty of these artists is al-Ghazzālī does not specifically say. He speaks only in general of that of the prophets and the divines, the virtuous and the pious and he thus continues in the next paragraph:

"The inner beauty of the pious rests on three principles: first, knowledge, . . . the most sublime form of which is that of God, . . . second, power to lead oneself and others to a better life and to maintain the kingdom of the world and the order of religion; . . . and, third, elevation above faults and deficiencies and all bad inclinations. . . . The more perfect these men are the more they are loved."<sup>22</sup>

Since knowledge, power and elevation above faults are found complete only in God and since they derive in their human form from Him, we can conclude that the love of the manifestations of the inner beauty by the perfect artist leads to God. From this point of view, we can surmise that an art object reflecting inner beauty should be regarded as "real," because al-Ghazzālī states that:

"the causes of love (and these include beauty) are real only as applied to God, in all other cases their existence is only delusion, imagination and metaphorical expression . . ."<sup>23</sup>

Hence we have here a profound, religious approach to art, which contrasts strongly with the usual stress placed by Western scholars on the secular and decorative character of Muslim art.

A somewhat similar attitude is found in al-Ghazzālī's discussion of the science of anatomy; here again he belittles the aspect of outer appearances and stresses this study as a key to the knowledge of the properties of God. He says:

"Those who study the structure of the human body do it only to become physicians. Medicine is, however, unimportant and, although it is indispensable, has nothing to do with the worship of God. . . .

"However, he who looks at the human body in order to see in it the marvellous working of God, to him three qualities of God must become apparent. First he will recognize that the builder of this body . . . is all-powerful, . . . and that He can achieve everything He wants to do. . . . Secondly he will recognize that . . . His knowledge comprises all things, because all these wonderful things with their wonderful ingenuity would be impossible, if their creator did not have universal wisdom. . . . Thirdly he will recognize that the mercy, kindness and compassion of God towards His slaves is infinite. . . . He gave them that which is indispensable for life . . . then that which is not indispensable . . . finally such things as

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152 and 164.

serve only for embellishment and adornment. . . . This kindness and care He not only bestowed on man alone, but also on other creatures down to the fly, wasp and the mosquito. . . . Just as the greatness of a poet, writer or artist becomes all the more notable the more you know of the wonderful works of poetry, writing and art ; in the same way miracles of the creation of God are a key to the knowledge of the greatness of the Creator."<sup>24</sup>

Therefore al-Ghazzālī recommends that, while

" no human mind should brood about the ' how ' and ' what ' of His exalted existence, no human heart should refrain from looking at His marvellous creations and from thinking on what and on whom their being rests. Man will then recognize from necessity that all things are marks of His power, rays of light of His knowledge, astounding testimonies of His wisdom and reflections of His beauty ; that all comes from Him and all exists through Him, in truth that He himself is everything. Nothing beside Him has real existence, because the existence of all things is only the reflection of the light of His existence."<sup>25</sup>

" Everything which has existence has the same relationship to the power of God as the shadow has to the tree and the light to the sun. The whole universe is the mark of the effect of His power and the existence of the universe follows His existence just as the existence of light follows that of the sun and the shadow that of the tree."<sup>26</sup>

It is thus clear that for al-Ghazzālī beauty is unequivocally tied up with his idea of the Deity and especially with the love of God ; however, it is likewise evident from his arguments that he acknowledges the existence of another form of appreciation of the beautiful, that of the external vision of the eye.

This outer vision is based on aesthetic principles as, for instance, is shown by the criteria which are cited for the beauty of a script. We should therefore not forget that in spite of the strong emphasis on inner beauty and inner vision, al-Ghazzālī's investigation actually reveals two approaches to art, those of the inner and the outer eye, one religious and the other secular.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

## THE MYSTERIES OF THE LETTER NŪN

BY RENÉ GUÉNON (FRANCE)

THE *nūn* is the 14th letter of both the Arabic and the Hebrew alphabets, its numerical value being 50 ; it occupies, however, a more especially significant place in the Arabic alphabet, of which it ends the first half, the total number of letters being 28 as against the 22 of the Hebrew alphabet. As for its symbolic correspondences, this letter, in the Islamic tradition, is considered principally as representing *El-Hūt*, the whale ; and this accords with the original meaning of the word *nūn* itself, from which the letter takes its name and which also signifies " fish " ; it is by reason of this meaning that *Seyidna Yūnus* (the prophet Jonah) is called *Dhūn-Nūn*. This naturally refers to the traditional symbolism of the fish and more especially to certain aspects of this symbolism that we have mentioned in a previous essay,<sup>1</sup> notably that of the " Fish-Saviour," represented by the *Matsya-Avatāra* of the Hindu tradition and the *Ichthus* of the early Christians. Moreover, in this respect, the whale fulfils a similar rôle to that allotted by other traditions to the dolphin, and like the latter corresponds to the zodiacal sign of Capricorn in so far as it represents the solstitial gateway giving access to the " ascending way " ; but the similarity to the *Matsya-Avatāra* is perhaps the most striking, as is shown by certain considerations deriving from the geometrical form of the letter *nūn* itself, particularly if they are related to the biblical story of the prophet Jonah.

To understand the question properly it should be remembered that *Vishnu*, manifesting himself in the form of a fish (*matsya*), commands *Satyavrāta*, the future *Manu Vaivasvata*, to construct the Ark in which the germs of the future world are to be enclosed, and that, in this same form, he then guides the Ark over the waters during the cataclysm which marks the separation of two successive *Manvantaras*. The rôle of *Satyavrāta* is here similar to that of *Seyidna Nūh* (Noah), whose Ark also contains all those elements which are destined to survive until the restoration of the world after the deluge ; it makes no matter that the application may be different, owing to the fact that the biblical deluge, in its more immediate significance, appears to mark the beginning of a more limited cycle than the *Manvantara* ; if not the same event, they are at least analogous to one another, since in each case the former state of the world is destroyed in order to make place for a new state. If we now compare what has just been said with the story of Jonah, we shall see that the whale, instead of simply playing the part of the fish which conducts the Ark, is in reality identified with the Ark itself ; thus Jonah remains enclosed in the body of the whale, like *Satyavrāta* and Noah in the Ark, during a period which is for him also, if not for the exterior world, a period of " obscuration," corresponding to the interval between two states or two modalities of existence ; here again the difference is only secondary, as the same symbolic figures are always susceptible of a double application, macrocosmic and microcosmic. Moreover, the emergence of Jonah from the belly of the whale has always been regarded as a symbol of resurrection, and thus of the passage of the being to a new state ; and this in turn may be related to the idea of " birth "

<sup>1</sup> See *Quelques aspects du symbolisme du poisson*, *Études Traditionnelles*, February, 1936.

attaching to the letter *nûn*, particularly in the Hebrew *Kabbalah*, to be understood spiritually as a "new birth," that is to say as a regeneration of the being, individual or cosmic.

The same thing is moreover clearly indicated by the actual form of the Arabic letter *nûn*, which is made up of the lower half of a circumference and a point representing the centre of this circumference. Now the lower half of a circumference is also a figure of the Ark floating on the waters, and the point at its centre represents the germ enclosed within the Ark; the central position of this point shows in addition that this germ is the "germ of immortality," the indestructible "core" which escapes all exterior dissolutions. It may also be remarked that the half-circumference in question is a schematic equivalent of the cup; thus, like the latter, it has in some respects the signification of a "matrix" in which the as yet undeveloped germ is contained, and which, as we shall see later on, is identical with the inferior or "terrestrial" half of the "World Egg."<sup>2</sup> Considered in this aspect, as the "passive" element of spiritual transmutation, *El-Hût* also represents in a certain sense every individuality in so far as it contains the "germ of immortality" at its centre, represented symbolically as the heart; and in this connection we will recall the strict relationship which exists between the symbolism of the heart and that of the cup and the "World Egg." The development of the spiritual germ implies that the being emerges from his individual state and from the cosmic environment to which it belongs, just as Jonah's restoration to life coincides with his emergence from the belly of the whale; and we may mention in passing that this emergence is equivalent to the issuing forth of the being from the initiatic cavern, the concavity of which is similarly represented by the half-circumference of the letter *nûn*.

The new birth necessarily implies a death in relation to the former state, whether in the case of an individual or a world; death and birth or resurrection are in reality inseparable from one another, being simply the two opposite faces of the same change of state. In the alphabet the letter *nûn* immediately follows the letter *mîm*, one of the principal significations of which is death (*el-marwt*). The form of this letter depicts the being in a completely contracted or merely virtual state, to which the attitude of prostration corresponds ritually; but this virtuality, which in appearance is an extinction, becomes at the same time, by virtue of the concentration of all the being's possibilities in one unique and indestructible point, the germ from which all development in the higher states will proceed.

It should be added that the symbolism of the whale possesses not only a beneficent but also a "malefic" aspect, which, apart from general considerations relating to the double meaning of symbols, is justified in a more special way by its connection with the two forms of death and resurrection under which every change of state appears, according to whether it is regarded in relation to the earlier or the subsequent state. The cavern is a place of burial at the same time that it is a place of "rebirth," and the whale fulfils precisely this double rôle in the story of Jonah; furthermore, might it not be said that the *Matsya-Avatâra* itself is first presented in the sinister guise of announcer of the cataclysm, before assuming the rôle of Saviour? In its malefic aspect the whale is clearly allied to the Hebrew Leviathan<sup>3</sup>; but in the Arab tradition this aspect is represented primarily by the "daughters of the whale" (*benât el-Hût*), who are equivalent from the

<sup>2</sup> By a curious concordance the sense of "matrix" (in Sanskrit *yoni*) is also contained in the Greek word *delphys*, which is at the same time the name of the dolphin.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindu *Makara* (which is also a sea monster), although above all possessing the "beneficent" meaning attached to the sign of Capricorn, whose place it occupies in the Zodiac, has none the less, in many of its representations certain characteristics which recall the "typhonian" symbolism of the crocodile.

astrological standpoint to *Rahn* and *Ketu* in the Hindu tradition, notably in their relation to the eclipses, and who, it is said, "will drink the ocean" on the last day of the cycle, on that day when "the stars will rise in the west and set in the east." We cannot pursue this subject further without digressing from our main theme; but we may remark in passing that here once again we find a direct allusion to the end of the cycle and the change of state which follows; this in itself is significant and brings added confirmation to what we have been saying.

Returning to the form of the letter *nūn*, a further observation may be made which is of considerable interest from the point of view of the relations existing between the alphabets of the different traditional languages: in the Sanskrit alphabet, the corresponding letter *na*, reduced to its fundamental geometrical elements, is likewise composed of a half-circumference and a point; but here, the convexity being turned upwards, it is formed by the upper half of the circumference, and not by the lower half as in the Arabic *nūn*. We thus have the same figure placed the other way up, or more exactly two figures that are strictly complementary to each other. If they are joined together, the two central points naturally merge into one another, and this gives a circle with a point at its centre, a figure which represents the complete cycle and which is also the sign of the Sun in astrology and of gold in alchemy.<sup>4</sup> Just as the lower half-circumference is a figure of the Ark, so the upper half-circumference represents the rainbow, which is analogous to the Ark in the strictest meaning of the word, all true analogy being "inverse." These two half-circumferences are also the two halves of the "World Egg," the one "terrestrial," in the "Lower Waters," the other "celestial," in the "Upper Waters"; and the circular figure, which was complete at the beginning of the cycle before the separation of the two halves, must be reconstituted at the end of the cycle. We may say, therefore, that the reunion of the two figures in question represents the accomplishment of the cycle, by the junction of its beginning and its end; and this appears particularly clearly if we refer to the "solar" symbolism, since the figure of the Sanskrit *na* corresponds to the sun rising and that of the Arabic *nūn* to the sun setting. On the other hand the complete circular figure is commonly the symbol of the number 10, the centre being 1 and the circumference 9; but here, being obtained by the union of the two *nūn*, it has the value of  $2 \times 50 = 10^2$ , which indicates that it is in the "intermediary world" that the junction must be brought about; this junction is in fact impossible in the "inferior world," which is the domain of division and "separativity," and on the other hand it is always accomplished in the "superior" world, where it is realised principally in a permanent and unchangeable manner in the "eternal present."

To these already lengthy remarks we will add but one thing further: it follows from what we have just been saying that the accomplishment of the cycle, as we have envisaged it, should have a certain correlation, in the historical order, with the meeting of the two traditional forms which correspond to its beginning and its end, and which have Sanskrit and Arabic respectively for their sacred languages: the Hindu tradition, on the one hand, inasmuch as it represents the most direct heritage of the Primordial Tradition, and, on the other hand, the Islamic tradition which, as the "Seal of Prophecy," represents the ultimate form of traditional orthodoxy for the present cycle.

<sup>4</sup> One will recall here the symbolism of the "Spiritual Sun" and the "Embryo of gold" (*Hiranyagarbha*) in the Hindu tradition; moreover, according to certain correspondences, *nūn* is the planetary letter of the Sun.



## ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EASTERN MEDITATION\*

BY DR. C. G. JUNG (ZURICH). *Translated by* CAROL BAUMANN†

THE deep interconnections between Yoga and the hieratic architecture of India have been pointed out by my friend, Heinrich Zimmer, whose unfortunate early death is a great loss to Indology.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, anyone who has seen the temple of Borobudur or the stūpas at Barhat and Sānchi, can hardly withstand the impression that an unusual spirit and a point of view foreign to the European, has been at work here—if he has not already come to this conclusion through a thousand other impressions of Indian life. In the innumerable facets of the overflowing wealth of Indian spirituality an inner view of the soul is mirrored, which at first appears strange and inaccessible to the European mind schooled in Greek tradition. Our minds perceive things, our “eyes drink what the eye-lids hold of the golden abundance of the world,” as Gottfried Keller says; and we interpret the inner world from the fulness of our outer impressions. We even deduce the inner content from the outer under the formulation: “Nothing is in the mind which has not first appeared to the senses.” This statement seems to have no validity in India. Indian thinking and formulation merely appear in the sense-world, but do not derive from it. In spite of the frequently conspicuous sensuality of expression it is unsensual, not to say suprasensual, in its truest essence. It is not the world of the senses, the body, colour and sound, or human passions, which are born anew in transfigured form through the creative power of the Indian soul; but it seems as if there were an “underworld” or an “overworld” of a metaphysical nature, out of which strange forms emerge into the familiar earthly world. If one observes closely the tremendously impressive impersonation of the gods, performed by the Southern Indian Kathakali dancers, there is not a single natural gesture to be seen. Everything is bizarre, both sub-human and super-human. The dancer-gods do not walk like people—they glide; they do not seem to think with their heads—but with their hands. Even the human faces disappear behind artistic blue enamelled masks. Our known world offers nothing which can be compared to such grotesque grandeur. When watching one of these spectacles one is transported into a world of dreams, for that is the only place where we might conceivably meet anything similar. The representations of the Kathakali dancers, or those depicted in the temple pictures, are, however, no nocturnal phantasms. They are tensely dynamic figures, logically constructed with the finest details, or as if they had grown organically. These are no shadows or likenesses of a former reality, they are more like realities which have *not yet been*, potential realities which can step at any moment over the threshold of existence.

Anyone who wholeheartedly surrenders himself to these impressions will soon notice that these figures do not impress the Indians as dream-like, but as if they were *real*, and indeed they also touch upon something in our own depths with an almost shocking

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† In response to our invitation Dr. Jung offered this special translation as he felt no longer able to undertake fresh literary work in addition to his existing commitments. Thus this very important contribution on the Psychology of Yoga is for the first time made available to a far wider public both in the East and West who are unacquainted with the original German version. (EDITOR).

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild*, Berlin, 1926.

vitality, but we have no words to express it. One notices also, that the deeper one is stirred the more our sense-world fades into a dream, and one seems to *awaken* in a world of gods of immediate reality.

That which the European notices at first in India is the superficially perceived corporeality, or attachment to the material world. But that is not India as the Indian sees it—it is not *his* reality. Reality is, as the German word *Wirklichkeit* implies, that which *works*.\* The epitome of “that which works” is for us coupled with the manifestation of the outer world, for the Indian on the other hand, it is connected with the *soul*. The world is for him a mere show or façade, and his reality comes close to being what we would call a dream.

This peculiar antithesis between East and West is significantly expressed by the contrast in our forms of worship. We speak of religious up-lift and exaltation; God is to us the Lord of the universe, we have a religion of brotherly love, and in our churches, whose spires strive upwards towards the heights, there is a *high altar*. India, on the other hand, speaks of *dhyāna*, meditation, of the *sinking* into contemplation, the divinity is within all things, especially inside of people, and one turns away from the outer to the inner. In the old Indian temples the altar is sunk six to eight feet deep in the earth, and that which we veil most shamefacedly is the holiest symbol to the Indian. We believe in *doing*, the Indian in impassive *being*. Our religious exercises consist of prayer, veneration, and singing hymns of praise. The Indian’s most important exercise is yoga, the sinking down into what we would call an unconscious condition, which however, he praises as the highest consciousness. Yoga is, on the one hand, the most striking expression of the Indian spirit, on the other hand it is the instrument which is continually used to produce this peculiar attitude of mind.

What is Yoga? The word means literally “yoking,” i.e., the disciplining of the motivating impulses, or instincts of the soul, which are called *kleśas*. The yoking aims at the control of those forces which attach people to the world. In the language of St. Augustine the *kleśas* correspond to the superbia and concupiscentia. There are many forms of Yoga, but all of them pursue the same goal. Here I will only mention, that aside from the purely psychical exercises, there is also the so-called Hatha Yoga, which teaches a sort of gymnastic, consisting chiefly of breathing exercises and special body postures. In the present paper I have chosen to describe a Yoga text which affords a deep insight into the psychical processes of Yoga. It is a little known text, a Chinese translation from the original Sanskrit, dating from the year 424 B.C., and is called: *Amitāyur-Dhyāna-Sūtra* (the *Sūtra* of the Meditation on *Amitāyus*).<sup>2</sup> This *Sūtra*, which is highly valued in Japan, belongs to the sphere of so-called theistic Buddhism, in which is found the teaching that Ādibuddha, or Mahābuddha, the primordial Buddha, brought forth the five Dhyānibuddhas or *Bodhisatvas*. One of the five is Amitābha, “the Buddha of the setting sun of immeasurable light,” the Lord of Sukhāvati, the land of supreme bliss. He is the protector of our present world-period, just as Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, is the teacher of it. In the cult of Amitābha it is noteworthy that a sort of Eucharistic feast with consecrated bread is celebrated, and Amitābha is sometimes depicted holding the vessel of the life-giving food of immortality, or with the holy water in his hand.

The text begins with an outer story, the full content of which need not concern us here. A crown prince seeks to take the life of his parents, and the Queen-consort, in her

\* “Wirklichkeit . . . ist das was *wirkt*.”

<sup>2</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XLIX, part II, pp. 161 ff. (translated by J. Takakusu).

extremity calls upon Buddha's help, praying that he send her his two pupils Maudgalyāyana and Ānanda. Buddha fulfils her wish and the two appear at once. At the same time Śākyamuni, the Buddha himself, also appears before her eyes. He shows her, in a vision, all ten worlds in order to allow her to choose in which one she wishes to be re-born. She chooses the western realm of Amitābha. He then teaches her the Yoga which should enable her to attain rebirth in the Amitābha land, and after giving her various moral instructions he speaks to her as follows :

"Thou and all other beings besides ought to make it their only aim, with concentrated thought, to get a perception of the western quarter. You will ask how that perception is to be found. I will explain it now. All beings, if not blind from birth, are uniformly possessed of sight, and they all see the setting sun. Thou shouldst sit down properly, looking in the western direction, and prepare thy thought for a close meditation on the sun : cause thy mind to be firmly fixed (on it) so as to have an unwavering perception by the exclusive application (of thy thought), and gaze upon it (more particularly) when it is about to set and looks like a suspended drum. After thou hast thus seen the sun, let (that image) remain clear and fixed, whether thine eyes be shut or open :—such is the perception of the sun, which is the First Meditation."

As we have already seen, the setting sun is an allegory of the immortality-dispensing Amitābha. The text continues :

"Next thou shouldst form the perception of water ; gaze on the water clear and pure, and let (this image) also remain clear and fixed (afterwards) ; never allow thy thought to be scattered and lost."

As already mentioned Amitābha is also the dispenser of the water of immortality.

"When thou hast thus seen the water thou shouldst form the perception of ice. As thou seest the ice shining and transparent thou shouldst imagine the appearance of lapis lazuli. After that has been done, thou wilt see the ground consisting of lapis lazuli transparent and shining both within and without. Beneath this ground of lapis lazuli there will be seen a golden banner with the seven jewels, diamonds and the rest, supporting the ground. *It extends to the eight points of the compass*, and thus the eight corners (of the ground) are perfectly filled up. Every side of the eight quarters consists of a hundred jewels, every jewel has a thousand rays, and every ray has eighty-four thousand colours which, when reflected in the ground of lapis lazuli, look like a thousand millions of suns, and it is difficult to see them all one by one. Over the surface of that ground of lapis lazuli there are stretched golden ropes intertwined crosswise ; divisions are made by means of (strings of) seven jewels with every part clear and distinct. . . .

"When this perception has been formed, thou shouldst meditate on its (constituents) one by one and make (the images) as clear as possible, so that they may never be scattered and lost, whether thine eyes be shut or open. Except only during the time of thy sleep, thou shouldst always keep this in mind. One who has reached this (stage of) perception is said to have dimly seen the Land of Highest Happiness (Sukhāvati). One who has obtained the *Samādhi* (the state of supernatural calm) is able to see the land (of that Buddha country) clearly and distinctly : (this state) is too much to be explained fully :—such is the perception of the land, and it is the Third Meditation."

*Samādhi* is "withdrawnness," i.e., a condition in which all world-connections are absorbed into the inner world. *Samādhi* is the eighth of the eight-fold paths.

After the above a meditation on the Jewel Tree of the Amitābha land is described, and then follows the meditation on the water.

"In the Land of Highest Happiness there are waters in eight lakes ; the water in every lake consists of seven jewels which are soft and yielding. Deriving its source from the king of jewels that fulfils every wish (*cintāmani*, the wishing-pearl). . . . In the midst of each lake there are sixty millions of lotus-flowers, made of seven jewels ; all the flowers are perfectly round and exactly equal (in circumference). . . . The water of jewels flows amidst the flowers and . . . the sound of the streaming water is melodious and pleasing, and propounds all the perfect virtues (*Parāmitas*), 'suffering,' 'non-existence,' 'impermanence' and 'non-self' ; it proclaims also the praise of the signs of perfection, and minor marks of excellence of all Buddhas. From the king of jewels that fulfils every wish, stream forth the golden-coloured rays excessively beautiful, the radiance of which transforms itself into birds possessing the colours of a hundred jewels, which sing out harmonious notes, sweet and delicious, ever praising the remembrance of Buddha, the remembrance of the Law and the remembrance of the Church ;—such is the perception of the water of eight good qualities, and it is the Fifth Meditation."

Concerning the meditation on Amitābha himself Buddha instructs the Queen in the following manner : "Form the perception of a lotus-flower on a ground of seven jewels." The flower has 84,000 petals, each petal 84,000 veins, and each vein possesses 84,000 rays, "of which each can be clearly seen."

"When you have perceived this, you should next perceive Buddha himself. Do you ask how ? Every Buddha Tathāgata is one whose (spiritual) body is the principle of nature (*Dharmadhātu-kāya*), so that he may enter into the mind of any beings. Consequently, when you have perceived Buddha, it is indeed that mind of yours that possesses those 32 signs of perfection and 80 minor marks of excellence (which you see in Buddha). In fine it is your mind that becomes Buddha, nay, *it is your mind that is indeed Buddha*. The ocean of true and universal knowledge of all the Buddhas derives its source from one's own mind and thought. Therefore you should apply your thought with an undivided attention to a careful meditation on that Buddha Tathāgata, *Arhat*, the Holy and Fully Enlightened One. In forming the perception of that Buddha, you should first perceive the image of that Buddha ; whether your eyes be open or shut, look at an image like Jāmbūnada gold in colour, sitting on that flower." (A river formed of the juice of the fruit of the Jambu tree flows in a circle around Mount Meru and returns to the tree.)

"When you have seen the seated figure your mental vision will become clear, and you will be able to see clearly and distinctly the adornment of that Buddha country, the jewelled ground, etc. In seeing these things let them be clear and fixed just as you see the palms of your hands. . . .

"If you pass through this experience, you will at the same time see all the Buddhas of the ten quarters. . . . Those who have practised this meditation are said to have contemplated the bodies of all the Buddhas. Since they have meditated on Buddha's body, they will also see Buddha's mind. It is *great compassion* that is called Buddha's mind. It is by his absolute compassion that he receives all beings. Those who have practised this meditation will, when they die, be born in the presence of the Buddhas in another life, and obtain a spirit of resignation wherewith to face all the consequences which shall hereafter arise. Therefore those who have wisdom should direct their thought to the careful meditation upon that Buddha Amitāyus."

"Of those who practise this meditation it is said that they no longer live in an embryonic condition but will "obtain free access to the excellent and admirable countries of Buddhas."

"After thou hast had this perception, thou shouldst imagine thyself to be born in the World of Highest Happiness in the western quarter, and to be seated, cross-legged, on a lotus-flower there. Then imagine that the flower has shut thee in and has afterwards unfolded; when the flower has thus unfolded, 500 coloured rays will shine over thy body, thine eyes will be opened so as to see the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who fill the whole sky; thou wilt hear the sounds of waters and trees, the notes of birds, and the voices of many Buddhas. . . ."

"Buddha then spoke to Ānanda and Vaidehī (the Queen): 'Those who wish, by means of their serene thoughts, to be born in the western land, should first meditate on an image of the Buddha, who is 16 cubits high, seated on (a lotus-flower in) the water of the lake. As it was stated before, the (real) body and its measurements are unlimited, incomprehensible to the ordinary mind. But by the efficacy of the ancient prayer of that Tathāgata, those who think of and remember him shall certainly be able to accomplish their aim.' . . ."

Buddha's speech continues for many pages, then: "When Buddha had finished this speech, Vaidehī, together with her 500 female attendants could see, as guided by the Buddha's words, the scene of the far-stretching World of the Highest Happiness, and could also see the body of Buddha and the bodies of the two Bodhisattvas. With her mind filled with joy she praised them, saying: 'Never, have I seen such a wonder!' Instantaneously she became wholly and fully enlightened, and attained a spirit of resignation, prepared to endure whatever consequences might yet arise. Her 500 female attendants too cherished the thought of obtaining the highest perfect knowledge, and sought to be born in that Buddha country. The World-Honoured One predicted that they would all be born in that Buddha country, and be able to obtain the *Samādhi* (the supernatural calm) of the presence of many Buddhas."

In a digression, concerning the fate of the Unenlightened, Buddha sums up the Yoga exercise as follows: "But, being harassed by pains, he will have no time to think of Buddha. Some good friend will then say to him: 'Even if thou canst not exercise the remembrance of Buddha, thou mayst, at least, utter the name, "Buddha Amitāyus."' Let him do so serenely with his voice uninterrupted; let him be (continually) thinking of Buddha until he has completed ten times the thought, repeating (the formula), 'Adoration to Buddha Amitāyus.' On the strength of (his merit of) uttering Buddha's name he will, during every repetition, expiate the sins which involve him in births and deaths during 80 millions of *kalpas*. He will, while dying, see a golden lotus-flower like the disc of the sun appearing before his eyes; in a moment he will be born in the World of Highest Happiness."

The above quotations form the essential content of the Yoga exercise which interests us here. The text is divided into 16 meditations, from which I have chosen only certain parts, but they will suffice to portray the intensification of the meditation, which culminates in *Samādhi*, the highest ecstasy and enlightenment.

The exercise begins with the concentration on the setting sun. In southern latitudes the intensity of the radiation of the setting sun is so strong that a few moments of gazing at it suffice to create an intense after-impression. With closed eyes one continues to see the sun for some time. As is well known there is one method of hypnosis which consists in fixating a shining object, such as a diamond or a crystal, so that one may suppose that the fixation of the sun is meant to produce a similar hypnotic effect. On the other hand it should not have a soporific effect, inasmuch as a "meditation" of the sun must accompany

the fixation. This meditation consists in a reflective thinking, a "making clear," in fact in a *realization* of the sun, its form, its characteristics, and its meanings. Since the round form plays such an important rôle in the following meditations it seems that the disc of the sun serves as a model for the later fantasies of round images ; and in the same manner, on account of its intense light, it prepares the way for the later resplendent visions.

The next meditation, that of the water, rests no longer on any sense-impression, but it now creates, through active imagination, the picture of a reflecting stretch of water. Such an expanse of water, as we know from experience, throws back the full light of the sun. It should then be imagined that the water transforms into "shining and transparent" ice. Through this procedure the immaterial light of the sun-image changes into the substance of water and this in turn into the solidity of ice. Thus a concretization of vision is apparently aimed at, and a materialization of the fantasy-creation results, which then takes the place of the physical nature of our known world. A *different reality* is created, so to speak, out of "soul matter." The ice, which naturally has a bluish colour, now transforms into blue lapis lazuli, into a solid stone image, which in its turn becomes a "ground," and yet it is "transparent and shining." With this "ground" it seems that an unalterable, absolutely real foundation is created. The blue transparent floor is like a glass lake, through the transparent layers of which one's gaze penetrates into the depths below.

The so-called "golden banner" then shines forth out of the depths. It should be mentioned here that the Sanskrit word *dhvaja* (banner or flag) carries also the meaning of "sign" and "symbol" in general. Therefore one can just as well speak of the appearance of the "symbol." It becomes clear that, inasmuch as the symbol "extends to the eight points of the compass" the plan of an eight-rayed system is depicted. As the text says "the eight corners (of the ground) are perfectly filled up," by the banner. The system shines "like a thousand millions of suns," so that the shining image of the sun has considerably increased its radiating energy, and its lighting power has now been intensified to an immeasurable radiance. The peculiar representation of the "golden ropes," which are spread over the system like a net, probably means that the image is tied together, and in this way fixed, so that it can no longer fall apart. Unfortunately the text mentions nothing about the possibility of a failure of the method, or of the crumbling apart which might take place on account of a mistake. But such disturbances, during an imaginative process, are not unexpected to an expert—on the contrary they form a regular occurrence. Therefore it is not astonishing that the Yoga vision provides a sort of inner reinforcement of the image through the golden ropes.

Although the text does not explicitly mention it, the eight-rayed system is already the Amitābha land. Wonderful trees grow therein, as it is meet and proper in a paradise so to do. Of especial importance is the water in the Amitābha land. Corresponding to the octagon it is arranged in the form of eight lakes, and the source of these waters is a central jewel, the *cintāmaṇi*, the wishing pearl, a symbol of the "treasure difficult to obtain,"<sup>3</sup> the highest value. In Chinese art it is the moon-like image, which appears so often in connection with the dragon. The wondrous tones or "sounds" of the waters consist of two pairs of opposites, which express the dogmatic fundamental truths of Buddhism: "suffering and non-existence" and "impermanence and non-self," signifying that all

\* C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Dodd Mead & Co. N.Y. (edition, 1925), p. 186.



existence is painful, and that all that clings to the ego is transitory. Non-self and non-existence liberate one from such errors. The sounding water is also like the teaching of Buddha, a redeeming water of wisdom, an "aqua doctrinæ," to use an expression of Origenes. The source of this water, the pearl without peer, is the Tathāgata, Buddha himself. The imaginative reconstruction of the Buddha image therefore immediately follows, and as this creation takes form the insight dawns that Buddha is really nothing other than the activating psyche of the Yogin—the meditator himself. It is not only that the image of Buddha is produced out of one's own consciousness and thoughts, but the *soul* which creates these thought-images is Buddha himself.

The image of Buddha sits in the round lotus in the centre of the Amitābha land, and he is distinguished by the great compassion with which he "receives all beings," i.e., even the meditator. This means that the inmost being, which is Buddha, appears in the vision and is revealed as the true Self of the meditator. He experiences himself as the only existing one, as the highest consciousness, which is even Buddha. In order to reach this last goal it is necessary to pass through all the laborious exercises of mental reconstruction, to get free of the blinded ego-consciousness which has caused the sorrowful illusion of the world, and to reach that other pole of the soul in which the world is contained as an illusion.

Although it appears exceedingly foreign to a European, this Yoga text is not merely a literary museum piece, inasmuch as it lives in the soul of the Indian, in this form as well as in many others, so that his life and thinking are permeated by it even into the smallest details. It is not as if Buddhism had nurtured or cultivated the Indian soul—it is rather Yoga. Buddhism itself was born out of the spirit of Yoga, which is much older and more universal than the historical reformation of Buddha. Anyone who attempts to understand Indian art, philosophy and ethics from the inside must of necessity befriend this spirit. Our habitual understanding from the outside breaks down here, because it is hopelessly inadequate and cannot grasp the essence of Indian spirituality. And I wish especially to warn against the oft attempted imitation of eastern practices. As a rule nothing more comes of it than an artificial blunting of our western intelligence. Of course, if anyone should succeed in giving up Europe from every point of view, and actually be nothing else than a Yogin, taking on all the ethical and practical consequences of sitting in the lotus position on a gazelle skin under a dusty banyan tree, floating out of this world and closing his days in nameless non-being, to such a one I would have to admit that he understood Yoga in the Indian sense. But whoever cannot do that should not behave as if he understood Yoga. He neither can nor should give up his western understanding, but on the contrary he should exert himself to apply his mind in an honest manner, without imitation or sentimentality, to understand as much of Yoga as is possible to our understanding. Since the secrets of Yoga mean as much or even more to the Indian than our own Christian mysteries mean to us, and just as we would not allow any foreigner to make our *mysterium fidei* ludicrous, we should not belittle the peculiar Indian representations and practices or scorn them as absurd errors. By doing that we would only close any access to an understanding. Indeed we in Europe have already gone too far in this respect, for the spiritual content of the Christian dogma has disappeared to a serious degree in a rationalistic and "enlightened" fog, which makes it all too easy for us to undervalue that which is unfamiliar and which we do not understand.

If we really wish to understand, then we can only do so in a European way. One can,

it is true, understand a great deal with the heart, but then the mind often finds it difficult to follow up with an intellectual formulation which gives a suitable expression to that which has been understood. There is also a form of understanding with the head, in particular that of the scientific mind, in which there is often too little room for the heart. We must therefore leave it to the reader's co-operation to use first one and then the other. First let us attempt with the head to find, or to build, that hidden bridge, which may lead us to a European understanding of Yoga.

For this purpose we must again take up the series of symbols, but this time we will consider their *meaning content*. The sun, with which the series begins, is the source of warmth and light, and the indubitable central point of our visible world. As the *dispenser of life*, it is nearly always and everywhere looked upon either as the divinity itself or at least as an image of the same. Even in Christian representations it has been used as a favourite allegory of Christ. A second source of life, especially in southern countries, is *water*, which also plays an important rôle in Christian allegory as for instance in the four rivers of paradise, and the living waters which sprang out of the side of the temple (Ezekiel's vision, chap. 47). The latter is compared to the blood which flowed from the wound in Christ's side. In this connection we may also remember the talk between Christ and the woman of Samaria at the well, and the rivers of living water which flow out of Christ's body (John vii, 38). A meditation on sun and water evokes such associations without fail, or similar meaning-connections. Thus the meditator will be led gradually from the foreground of visible appearances into the background, in other words to the *spiritual meaning which lies behind the object* of meditation. He is transported into the psychical sphere, where sun and water, divested of their physical objectivity, become symbols with a spiritual content, images of the source of life in the individual soul. For indeed our consciousness does not create itself—it arises from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep, i.e., out of an unconscious condition. Consciousness is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious. For, an exacting exploration of the process of consciousness reveals the fact that it is not only influenced by the unconscious, but that it continuously emerges out of it in the form of numberless spontaneous ideas and sudden flashes of thought. The meditation on the meaning of the sun and water is therefore something like a descent into the fountain-head of the soul, even into the unconscious itself.

We find here, to be sure, a difference between the spirit of the East and that of the West. It is the same difference which we have already encountered—that between the high and the low altar. The West is always seeking uplift, but the East seeks a sinking or deepening. The outer reality, its corporeality and weight, appears to impress the European much more powerfully and sharply than the Indian. Therefore the European seeks to raise himself above the world, while the Indian likes to return into the maternal depths of Nature.

Just as Christian contemplation, as for instance in the *Exercitia Spiritualia* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, strives to comprehend the holy image with all the senses as concretely as possible, so the Yoga concretizes, or solidifies the water which the meditator contemplates—at first to ice and then into lapis lazuli; and thereby he creates a firm "ground" as he calls it. He makes, so to speak, a solid body for his vision. Thus he endows his inner world, i.e., the representations of his soul, with a concrete reality, which takes the place of the outer world. It is true that at first he sees nothing but a reflecting blue

surface, like that of a lake or ocean (which is also a favourite symbol of the unconscious in western dreams) but under the reflecting expanse of water unknown depths lie hidden, which are dark and mysterious.

As the text says, the blue stone is *transparent*, which informs us that the gaze of the meditator can penetrate into the depths of the soul's secrets : and there he now sees that which could not be seen before, i.e., that which was unconscious. Just as sun and water are the physical sources of life, so they express as symbols the essential secret of the life of the unconscious in the *banner*. This means that the Yogin envisions the symbol, which he now sees through the floor of lapis lazuli, as an image of the previously invisible and apparently formless source of consciousness. Through *dhyāna*, i.e., the sinking into and deepening of the contemplation, the unconscious has apparently taken on form. It is as if the light of consciousness, which has ceased to illumine the objects of the outer world of the senses, now illumines the darkness of the unconscious. If the world of the senses, and all thought of it, is completely obliterated, then the inner world comes forward more distinctly.

Here the eastern text skips over a psychical phenomenon, which becomes a source of endless difficulties for the European. If the European attempts to shut out the representations of the outer world, and to empty his mind from all that is outside, he will at first become the prey of his own *subjective fantasies*, which have nothing to do with the content of our text. Fantasies have not a good reputation, they are said to be cheap and worthless and are therefore discarded as useless and meaningless. They are the *kleśas*, those disorderly and chaotic instinctual forces which Yoga purposes to yoke. The *Exercitia Spiritualia* follow the same goal, and in fact both methods seek to attain success by providing the meditator with the object of contemplation ; and by describing that image upon which he should concentrate they attempt to rule out the so-called worthless fantasies. Both methods, the eastern as well as the western, attempt to reach the goal by a direct path. I do not wish to question the possibilities of success of a meditation exercise which takes place within the framework of a church. But outside of a church the thing does not as a rule work, or it may even lead to deplorable results. By throwing light on the unconscious, one at first gets into the chaotic sphere of the personal unconscious, which contains all that one would like to forget, and what one does not wish to admit to oneself or to anyone else, and which one prefers to believe is not true anyhow. One expects therefore to come off best if one looks as little as possible into this dark corner. But naturally whoever proceeds in this way will never get past this corner. In no case will he be able to attain even a trace of that which Yoga promises. Only he who traverses this darkness can hope to make any further progress at all. I am therefore in principle against the uncritical appropriation of Yoga practices by Europeans, because I know all too well that they hope to avoid their dark corners in this way. However, such a procedure is absolutely meaningless and worthless.

We can now understand the deeper reason why we in the West have never developed anything comparable to Yoga, aside from the very limited application of the Jesuitical *Exercitia*. We have a profound fear and horror of our personal unconscious. It is for this reason that the European much prefers to tell others "how to do it." That the improvement of mankind begins with the individual, yes even with *myself*, does not enter our heads. Moreover, many people think it is morbid to glance into one's own interior, it makes one melancholic—as even a theologian once assured me.

I have stated above that we have developed nothing which may be compared to

Yoga. This is not entirely correct. Corresponding to our European bias a medical psychology has evolved, which deals especially with the *klesas*. We call it the "psychology of the unconscious." The point of view inaugurated by Freud, recognized the importance of the human shadow-side and its influence on consciousness, and then got stuck there. This psychology is occupied with exactly that which our text passes over in silence, and assumes to be already taken care of. Yoga is perfectly aware of the world of the *klesas*, but the naturalness of its religion does not know the *moral conflict* which the *klesas* represent for us. An ethical dilemma divides us from our shadow. The spirit of India grows out of nature; our spirit stands opposed to Nature.

The floor of lapis lazuli is not transparent for us because the *question of evil in Nature* must first be answered. This question *can* be answered, but surely not through shallow rationalistic arguments or any intellectual rigmarole. Only the ethical responsibility of the individual can give a valid answer, but there are no cheap recipes or licences—one must pay to the last penny before the floor of lapis lazuli can become transparent. Our *sūtra* presupposes that the shadow-world of our personal fantasies, i.e., the personal unconscious, has already been traversed and goes on to depict a symbolical form which impresses us at first as strange. This is a geometrical radial design, divided into eight quarters, an *Ogdoas*, and a lotus appears in the centre in which Buddha sits. The decisive experience in the meditation is finally the knowledge that the meditator is himself Buddha, whereby the vicissitudes of fate described in the outer story disappear or are resolved. The concentric symbol obviously expresses the highest concentration, which can only be achieved when the formerly described diversion of interest, which leads the attention away from the impressions of the sense-world together with its attachment to objects, is pushed to the limit, when turned inward towards the background of consciousness. The conscious world with its attachment to the object, indeed even the centre of consciousness, the ego, is extinguished, and in its place appears the splendour of the Amitābha land in ever increasing enhancement.

Psychologically this means that behind or under the world of personal fantasies and desires a still deeper layer of the unconscious appears which, in contrast to the chaotic disorder of the *klesas*, is ruled by the highest order and harmony and, in contrast to the former *multiplicity*, it represents the all-containing *unity* of the "*bodhi mandala*"—the magic circle of enlightenment.

One may ask what has our psychology to say to the Indian evidence of a super-personal world-embracing unconscious, which appears when the darkness of the personal unconscious becomes transparent? Our modern psychology has discovered that the personal unconscious is only a superficial layer, which rests on an entirely different foundation, which we call the *collective unconscious*. The reason for this designation is the circumstance that, unlike the personal unconscious and its purely personal contents, the images in the deeper unconscious have a distinctly mythological character. That is to say, that in form and content they are in accord with all those widespread primordial representations which underlie every myth and legend. They have no longer a personal nature, but consist of a purely impersonal or super-personal nature, and therefore they are common to all men. For this reason they are to be found in the myths and legends of all peoples and times, as well as in the productions of single individuals, who have not the slightest conscious knowledge of mythology.

Our European psychology has reached as far as the Yoga, inasmuch as it is able to demonstrate scientifically a deeper layer of unity in the unconscious. The mythological

motifs, whose presence has been proved by the exploration of the unconscious, form it is true a *multiplicity*, but this is crowned by a concentric or radial order, which produces the true centre, or the essence of the collective unconscious. On account of the remarkable agreement between the insight of the Yoga and the results of psychological investigation, I have chosen the Sanskrit term "*mandala*" (circle) for this central symbol.

The reader will now surely ask : but how in the world does science come to such conclusions ? There are two paths which lead to this end. The first is the historical path. If we investigate, for instance, the introspective method of Mediaeval natural philosophy we see that it made use of the circle again and again, and indeed almost always of the quartered circle, to symbolise the central principle, and this in open dependence on the church allegory of the quaternity as it is found in numberless representations of the *Rex gloriae* with the four evangelists, the four rivers of paradise, the four winds, etc.

The second path is the empirical-psychological way. In a certain stage of the psychological treatment patients sometimes spontaneously paint or draw such *mandalas*, either because they dream of them or because they suddenly feel the necessity to compensate the confusion in their souls through the representation of an ordered unity. For example, our Swiss national saint, the blessed brother Niklaus von der Flüe, went through such a process, the result of which can still be seen in the picture of the trinity in the parish church at Sachseln. Through the help of circular pictures, which he found in a small book by a German mystic,<sup>4</sup> he succeeded in interpreting his great vision which had shaken him to the depths, and thereby he assimilated his shock.

But what has our empirical psychology to say to the Buddha who sits in the lotus ? Logically one would expect that Christ must be enthroned in the centre of western *mandalas*. This was once true, as has already been mentioned, in the Middle Ages. But our modern *mandalas*, which are spontaneously produced without any preconceived ideas or outer suggestions, contain no figure of Christ, still less a Buddha in the lotus. On the other hand, the equal-armed so-called Greek cross, or even an unmistakable imitation of the swastika, is to be found fairly often. I cannot discuss this strange fact here, which in itself is of course of great interest.<sup>5</sup>

There exists a subtle and yet enormous difference between the Christian and the Buddhist *mandalas*. The Christian during contemplation, would never say : "*I am Christ*," but with Paul he will confess "*I live ; yet not I but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal., ii, 20). Our *sūtra*, however, says : thou wilt know that *thou* art Buddha. Fundamentally these confessions are identical, in as much as the Buddhist only attains this knowledge when he is without self, "*anātman*." But there exists an immense difference between the two formulations. The Christian attains his end in Christ, the Buddhist recognizes that *he* is Buddha. The Christian, starting from the transitory and ego-centric world of his consciousness, dissolves in Christ, but the Buddhist *still* rests on the eternal foundation of inner Nature, whose at-one-ness with the divinity, or with the universal Being, we meet in other Indian confessions as well.

<sup>4</sup> Compare : P. Alban Stöckli, O.M. Cap., *Die Visionen des Seeligen Bruder Klaus*, Einsiedeln, 1933. See also C. G. Jung, *Bruder Klaus*, Neue Schweizer Rundschau, 1933, Heft 4.

<sup>5</sup> The reader will find the necessary information in my book *Psychology and Religion*, Yale University Press, 1938.

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION

BY S. RADHAKRISHNAN

### I

**T**HERE is to-day scarcely any system of human activities which has not been significantly affected by the rise and growth of natural science. Its victories have been so dazzling and its progress so rapid that our minds are filled with scientific conceptions of life and habits of mind. These have affected the traditional teachings of religion.

"Philosophy removes from religion all reason for existing," announces Croce. (It is assumed that rational arguments are opposed to religious beliefs.) We do not now explain natural phenomena by the hypothesis of psychic forces. That has been slowly given up. Copernicus removed the earth from the centre of the universe and dethroned man from the exalted position he had held as the crown of creation. When Galileo founded modern mathematical physics, the exact movements of heavenly bodies were traced to mechanical laws. Darwin and Wallace explained organic life in accordance with clearly perceptible natural laws. By suggesting man's descent from animal life, biological evolution has deprived him of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created. The view that man is a conscious creature capable of choice and able to decide whether he shall write classics of wisdom or advertisements for toothpaste is destroyed by recent psychology. According to Freud, man is not master of himself even in his conscious ego. His life is governed by animal instincts hidden and embedded in the unconscious of which he has little knowledge. Sin is not hostility to the divine will but only a neurosis. Behaviourism looks upon the mind of the human infant as a perfectly blank sheet on which we can inscribe anything we please. If some men are wicked, it is due to bad glands and unwise conditioning. Marxists believe that the soul is wholly a product of circumstances. Its acts of thinking, valuing, deciding, are not the expression of its free activity but are the products of its social environment. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness." Human likes and dislikes are determined by conditions as rigid as those which govern the fall of bodies or the growth of plants.

Human values are said to be determined by the chance situations in which we find ourselves. They are as unstable as the clouds and are exposed to all the contingencies of chance. Modern historical investigation has discovered in increasing measure the predominance of geographical, economic, social and other causes even in the most outstanding of human achievements. Marx points out that social transformation is due to mechanical causes rather than to the will of man. Professor J. B. Bury said: "A historian may be a theist but so far as his work is concerned this particular belief is otiose."<sup>1</sup>

These different views have led to the conviction that we must seek future happiness in this world alone by a development of our natural and rational powers, by an increasing

<sup>1</sup> *Darwin and History in Selected Essays* (1930), p. 33.



domination of nature leading to greater happiness and welfare. Religion is regarded as exclusively or primarily other-worldly in its outlook, an escape from the hard facts of reality, from the urgent tasks of life. It furnishes man with an excuse for accepting existing conditions of political and social injustice. By its whole temper and outlook, it threatens social progress and freedom of intellectual life. Religions cannot claim to be great civilising agencies. While they to some extent inspired spiritual life, encouraged the arts, disciplined the mind and fostered the virtues of charity and peace, they have also filled the world with wars, tortured the souls and burnt the bodies of men. The average cultivated person whose mental life has been moulded by the movement of science adopts in religious matters an attitude of detached scepticism. The secularisation of culture, the increasing detachment of our civilisation from religious roots has been continuous and universal, for its agent science has been universal in its temper and activity. It is one, though its achievements may be in different places and by different persons. In the geographical sense also, it is universal because it has penetrated to all parts of the globe. The growing disbelief in religion is not due to the perversity of the modern mind, but its consciousness of genuine difficulties in the matter of the acceptance of religious faith. We must appreciate these difficulties and present, if possible, not a weak and unprincipled compromise between religion and science but a positive faith which accepts and assimilates the spirit of science.

## II

The scientific enterprise which has cast doubts on religious traditions discloses also man's utter dependence on non-human factors. Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Marx and Freud make out that man's spirit is inexorably conditioned. He is utterly dependent on the blind forces of nature, on psychological, social and historical conditions. He must answer the questions which human life and the world raise, if the restlessness of his heart is to be removed. He must come to a working relationship with these objective forces, if his mind is not to be divided against itself. Adjustment to the environment, natural and social, a rational ordering of man's relations to them is essential for the life and dignity of man.

At the dawn of history man finds himself confronted by a threefold challenge. He has to reckon with the physical universe which frames his life, with the society of which he finds himself a member, and with his own inward nature. In the effort to respond to this threefold challenge, man rises to his full stature and brings into play all the powers of his mind. In the course of human history different ways of adjustment to the non-human factors have been devised. By propitiating the gods (animism) who operate the world, by controlling the laws which govern it (magic) or by establishing relations with his fellows (sociality), man attempts to overcome his insignificance and isolation. The human soul has built these schemes of beliefs and conduct to defend itself against original fear. If these attempts are not based on truth they stimulate a false optimism, an unreal idealism. Man longs by nature to attain truth and thus free himself from the travails which hinder the free development of his personality. No illusory aids can free him from the sense of fear and isolation. If the traditional religious schemes are unscientific, we have to devise new ones which are in accord with man's reason, and are based on truth and love and not authority and hell-fire.

The insufficiency of a strictly scientific humanism which recognises nothing greater

than man has become manifest after the two wars we have passed through in our lifetime. Nature has been conquered but man has suffered defeat. Man the inventor, the forger of new gadgets has achieved wonders but as a moral, social and political being he has failed miserably. He knows the better but pursues the worse. He can apprehend perfection but is in no sense perfect. That is the grim paradox of human existence. The humanist creed which affirms the virtues of the natural man, his innate goodness, his capacity for perfection, his faith in the omnipotence of reason bred by the progress of science and man's increasing mastery of nature has received a sharp challenge by his admitted failure to build up a world order, secular in its aim and spirit. We are aware of it and that is why there is in the air to-day a sense of frustration, a deep despair. We demand of the individual that he should overcome his selfishness and live for the common good, but this attempt is thwarted by the inborn nature of man. The individual in the inmost core of his existence offers resistance to the demands of reason. We seem to be the victims of our own earthliness, martyrs to our own passions. That is the grim paradox of human existence "The great light shineth in great darkness." There is a certain duality in our nature which we cannot overcome by any amount of scientific advance or humanist development.

Hindu and Buddhist thinkers tell us that this duality and the fear and isolation which are its direct effects are traceable to man's ignorance or *avidyā*. Ignorance is the product of our intellectual consciousness which makes us aware of our humiliation, of our participation in the course of nature subject to all its laws. To the world of nature which is continual becoming, ebb and flow, belong all existences which spring into being, grow and dissolve. This process is governed by strict law. The inevitability of death is a truth which none could think of denying. Suffering, according to Buddhism, is inseparable from all states of existence. Of all species on earth, the human raises the question "Why is there suffering, why is there death?" Again, we have a mistaken notion of ourselves and develop a sense of egotism. We arrogate rights which do not belong to us and thus come into conflict with others whose rights we have usurped. We attribute to the individual self which belongs to the world of becoming, reality and permanence. This false view results in the rise of selfish craving and attachment. The two together, our awareness of physical evil and moral evil produces an inward disquiet, *aśānti*. A life of ignorance in which man thinks himself to be the centre of the cosmos, in which fear becomes the pervasive element of life, where he attempts all the time to enslave nature, to enslave man is manifestly in need of redemption. The ignorance which leads to selfish craving and wrong action should be removed. This view is not peculiar to Hindu and Buddhist thought. The symbolism of the second chapter of *Genesis* expresses it. The Lord God commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." We have tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge and the fall of man is the result. The fall symbolises the disintegration of the harmony, the conflict in the individual self, with nature and with man. Adam and Eve were smitten with fear at the moment they became conscious of having entered into a new relationship with reality. They had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their awareness of the good and the frightening consciousness of their moral failure, their inability to rise to the sense of obligation which the awareness of good conveyed, inspired them with fear. From the point of view of an evolutionary philosophy which makes human nature a gradual unfolding from subhuman life, there is no doubt that the rise of

intellectual consciousness is not a fall but marks an ascent from the subhuman level. The Fall is a logical way of accounting for the facts of failure and suffering and the need to rise from them to perfection and joy.

If our destiny is perfection, our present condition is a fall from it. Theologically, it is a state of self-assertion which necessarily divides man from God. The resurrection is the restoration to unity, with oneself, with fellowmen and with nature.

### III

The human being caught in the turmoil of the temporal world wishes to attain enlightenment which removes ignorance and gives him stability. This knowledge is not intellectual information for our ideas are determined by natural, social and other factors and we cannot rely on them. True knowledge is not the innocence of the new born babe but the enlightenment of the experienced sage. It is the wisdom by which Boethius was consoled, the wisdom uncreate, in the words of Augustine, "the same now as it ever was and ever will be." While avidyā or intellectual consciousness causes fear, isolation, death, vidyā or direct intuitive consciousness helps us to rise from division and conflict into freedom and love, into awareness and being. The self-conscious individual is not the end of creation. The cosmic process is working for the emergence and development of free, universal creative consciousness when we participate in true being.

Plato tells us that the philosopher is the spectator of all time and existence. Time and existence, the wheel of saṃsāra belongs to the object side but the spectator is the pure subject. According to Pascal man, however insignificant he may be as compared with the universe, is yet a conscious thinking being and so superior to the universe. Even if the universe utterly destroys him, he still remains superior to that which crushes him, for he is aware of his annihilation. He knows that the universe has power over him, whereas the universe knows nothing of all this. This knower, this subject, is the true self. "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."<sup>2</sup> The subject, the "I," the essential self of man, the spirit in him, is different from the existential self, from the jīva. The jīva, a particular, concrete individual is implicated in the world of nature and society. When the true self is confused with the finite ego, we have the fear of nature, fear of man, fear of our own inward discord. Man as a biological phenomenon is subject to birth and death which are natural processes. He is conditioned by the historical situation into which he is born. Our finitude is revealed by the inevitability of death, by our moral failure, our struggle and suffering. As long as man looks upon himself as an object of nature and shapes his life and world according to this concept, he estranges himself from his real self. True enlightenment consists in the freeing of the spirit in man from the bondage to nature, from the yoke of objectivity to which it has yielded itself. The fundamental distinction is between spirit and nature, puruṣa and prakṛti and not between mind and body. All the distinctions of physical, biological, psychological and social belong to the side of nature. The jīva belongs to the world of nature. Spirit belongs to another order. The apprehension of spirit is by a process of direct intuition. Augustine says: "I entered and beheld with the eye of the soul the Light that never changes above the eye of the soul, above my intelligence." The belief in the direct contact with the Real is common to all

<sup>2</sup> I Corinthians III, 18.

religious traditions. The creeds of religion reflect the intellectual backgrounds of the time and spheres in which they were composed. But these connotations are of little consequence for the understanding of the basic truth of all religions.

To get at the Spirit we must eliminate the hindrances, remove the obstacles which obscure its presence in us. Non-attachment to the ego and the objective world is the prerequisite. The Sufi mystic, Attar says : " So long as *thou* art in evidence God is asleep : when thou shalt cease to be He shall wake up." To get at the absolute reality we must rise above all states and processes of mind, above emotions and thoughts, above aspirations and deeds and find in wordless communion, in a beatific consciousness which transcends images, ideas and mental states of every kind, contact of the soul centre with the Absolute reality, the flight of the Alone to the Alone. Meditation or the cultivation of calmness, the attuning of the whole being to reality, the fostering of a state of perfect receptivity, of serenity which nothing can disturb is essential for the achievement of the great vision.

This view does not commit us to a fundamental dualism. The object world is not denied. It is to be illuminated by spirit. The distinction between spirit and soul, between *âtman* and *jiva* does not imply their absolute separation. Spirit is not a substance, not an objective reality but it is authentic life. To bring out its distinction from the objective world, we look upon it as non-objective, non-empirical. It is being in itself and not an object, and can only be known by personal experience. In the world of nature the problem of knowledge is always a matter of subject-object relationship. When we begin to offer arguments for the existence of God, we conceive of God as an objective reality. The duality of subject and object is overcome in spiritual experience for in it the knowing subject is at the same time the known object. Spirit is only open to spirit. There is no more a question of proof or disproof. Spiritual experience reveals the reality of spirit. It is the basic fact which cannot be proved by sense perceptions or logical concepts. Those who question the reality of spiritual experience and put it down for an illusion or the result of auto-suggestion assume wrongly that spirit is revealed to us in the same way as objects in the natural world. But in the realm of spirit reality is not extrinsic.

The whole world of nature is a condition of spirit and depends on it. To discover the real within us is relatively easy ; we must discover it also in the outer world of men and things. The heights within are visible to those who exclude from their purview all that lies without. However painful this process of exclusion may be, it is easier than the process of inclusion by which we come to know the real behind the process of becoming. There can be no becoming without being, no object without the subject. When we look upon the Absolute Spirit as the basis and background of the world of nature, we get the conception of a Supreme Lord of the universe.

The enlightened sage whose whole being is radically altered, who knows that the whole world is rooted in the Supreme, has universal love and compassion. He becomes the heart of all beings, *sarvabhūteṣu hydayam*. He strives to reveal the divine in human life and the world. The objective processes do not touch his integrity. Death has no sting for him. He knows that whatever comes into existence must perish. In the decisive moments, he will, if necessary, prefer death to life and thus show that there are values beyond the limits of temporal existence. According to the Christian tradition, God-man gives his life and offers the perfect gift of love, himself, to the Lord of mankind. By losing his self, he has his self exalted into a new unity whereby he lives the life of

God himself. Through suffering we grow and increase in consciousness and transform our earthly life into a movement of the Divine. Tapas or austerity has been regarded from the beginning of India's history as the means by which man can free his consciousness from the limitations of the ignorant, egoistic movement. It is a similar idea that underlies the Christian doctrine of the place of the Cross as the saving power in human life. Many of us to-day are not prepared to pay the cost, to make the act of self-denial and so rationalize our desires and declare that religion is an illusion !

The consecrated souls have the power of dealing with persons and events far beyond the self's natural capacities. Their anchorage in reality is so firmly established that it persists unbroken among the distractions of the world. While the central aim of religion is to cast out the impulses of pride and fear, greed and selfishness which sweep through the human heart and remake man, it will eventually make for the remaking of the world community.

Humanity has been passing through a time of testing for which there is no precedent or parallel in our history. If we are to build a social system which will free us from fear and want, which will respect the dignity of the human individual, we ourselves have to grow. We must realise the hidden world beneath our conscious life where we reach out to one another, bound together by links that are not of this world's forging. The accidents of an empirical realism are not reflected there.

Religion of the type we have briefly outlined accepts the challenge of science, assimilates its lessons and preserves for humanity what is vital in religious endeavour. It demands the renewal of man's spirit or the growth of man from an intellectual to an illumined consciousness if we wish to adopt the language of evolutionary philosophy. Religion is a transforming experience, the result of inward change and discipline. It has tremendous social effects. It is both spiritual and humanistic, solitary and social. Its adherents symbolise conviction in a world of waverers, purity in an age of easy morals, human brotherhood in an anarchical world of nations and races and heroic courage in times of persecution.

RIG-VEDA I, 31

A TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

BY DR. MURRAY FOWLER (HARVARD UNIVERSITY)

... *neśvarādanyaḥ saṁsāri.*

... no transmigrator other than the lord.

—*Brahmasūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣyam*, I, 1, 5.

Hast thou no need that aught contain thee, who containest all things, since what thou fillest thou fillest by containing it?

—*The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, 1, 3.

I am the doubter and the doubt,

And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Brahma*.

THE adjective to describe the point of view from which this hymn has been examined and from which the following translation has been made is *theological*, or *metaphysical*, or (as some may prefer) *psychological*: the version is thus distinct, immediately, from a naturalistic interpretation; and, by implication, from a ritualistic one. It is distinct from a ritualistic interpretation in that an attempt has been made to go behind the mimesis of ritual and to find the action of which ritual (like tragedy) is always the imitation; it is distinct from a naturalistic interpretation in that this action is thought of as occurring, on one level of reference, within the mind of man.

The Brāhmaṇas show that hymns of the Rig-Veda have a definite part in the prescribed forms of worship: it is useful, therefore, to know (as, for example, Sāyaṇa often tells us) at what part of the ritual a verse is recited. But when ritual is an end in itself, religion is moribund or sterile or merely aesthetic. The vigour of most Rig-Vedic verse would seem to reflect a period of thought which is far from moribund; yet the skill of the poets indicates a long period of growth and development. The precise stage of this development which may be represented by any one of the hymns is, as yet, a matter only of opinion: it is, therefore, hazardous to build a theory on the supposition that they were all composed *ad hoc* to serve an already crystallized formalism. Likewise, that the complex Vedic mythology can plausibly be explained as solar can hardly be denied: it is always useful to have that explanation before all others. But that Vedic mythology is only and exclusively solar is doubtful: there is evidence that, in the Vedas, as elsewhere, a motion and a spirit dwells not only in the light of setting suns, but in the round ocean and the living air, in the blue sky, and in the mind of man. It is to be expected, then, that the following translation will differ from others previously made. No adverse criticism is, however, intended in this introduction or implied in the translation; and if some part of the following attempt be successful, it is not intentionally so at the expense of any other version or of any other point of view.<sup>1</sup>

It may be charged that there is no method in metaphysics; and that a metaphysical interpretation is, of its own nature, in the best sense of the abused word, unscientific.

<sup>1</sup> I do personally repudiate the judgment (unfortunately expressed in some handbooks) that the *do ut des* formula satisfactorily explains any but a small number of (as I think) degenerate hymns of the Rig-Veda.



Such a charge is justified and to be acknowledged. It is possible, however, that, decrying with the great Wilamowitz "that devil imagination," by application of the rigid methodology of linguistics to the Rig-Veda, metaphysics or theology or psychology may be produced. If we can have a *Theologie der Hellenen*, can we not find the theology of the Vedas? A new lexicon of Vedic terms, scrupulously compiled—the equivalent of Grassmann, but from a different point of view—is badly needed. No linguist will have to be told of the preliminary continuous work of translation which such a project requires.

To the advancement of that work the following attempt at re-definition is directed.\*

## RIG-VEDA I, 31

1. Thou, O Agni, the forerunner and divine seer of the gods, became our good companion; in thy will were born the wise, active through knowledge, the Maruts with their glittering spears.

- āṅgiras* : The meaning "messenger" or "apostle" is elsewhere desirable. The root is probably *ang* "move": hence "the moving one"; and the *prathamō āṅgirā* may then be "the prime moving one"—but not the "Prime Mover" in the Western sense, since this does not appear to be the function of Agni. I have here translated the two words as "forerunner." Cf. stanza 11.
- sākhā* : "friend, companion": prob. *sa + khyā*, "one who watches together with." The concept, not the word, may be the same as that of the *δαίμων* in Greek religion, the *genius* in early Italian, and the *fylgja* in the Old Norse cults. Cf. the excellent article in Pauly-Wissowa s. v. *genius*.
- ṛṣi* : Both these words have their origin in *ṛṣ* "glide, flow, rush, thrust, push." This is clear in *ṛṣti*, "the gliding, thrusting, pushing"; but it is not so evident in *ṛṣi*, where the idea of easy, smooth movement has probably come to include that of inspiration, of knowledge won through grace. Cf. stanza 16.

2. Thou, O Agni, the first, the most active, the wise, encompassest the will of the gods; manifest (*vibhūr*), for all creation sacrificial (*médhiro*); twice-born, yet latent everywhere for motion.

- āṅgirastamah* : "who has most the quality of the *āṅgiras*": hence "the most active." root *bhū* "become" + *vi* "separate." The idea I take to be that of the One becoming Many: when the One is manifest as the Many, it is the sacrifice.
- médhiro* : Grassmann cites *medhā* "Weisheit." In view of the context, *medhā* "sacrifice" may perhaps be a better comparison. The meaning, however, may not be "sacrificial" except in an extended sense: it may most literally contain the causative of *mi* (from *mā*) "build, extend, erect" and thus mean "being built or extended or erected" [for all creation]. "With this whole stanza cf. RV 8, 19, 2, 3.
- dvimātā* : "With two mothers." In the ritual, the upper and the lower fire-sticks: the symbolization of the creation of life is evident, and the extension to all pairs throughout the universe is limitless. Hence: "twice-born," although "having two birthplaces" might serve as well.
- āyāve* : "For movement, motion." The root is *i* "go." The opposition of *śayuh* (root *śi* "rest") is the key.

\*I have used constantly the translations of Geldner and of Grassmann; Grassmann's *Wörterbuch*; and Pischel and Geldner's *Vedische Studien*. I have not repeated their notes. My indebtedness to *A New Approach to the Vedas*, by Dr. Coomaraswamy, I hope may be obvious; if it is not, the fault is mine.

3. Thou, O Agni, become first manifest to Matarisvan [=Vayu?], with great force for enlightenment. The two worlds shook at the election of the outpouder; thou wert equal to the burden; thou, O light, didst offer up the powers.

*Mātarisvan*: Despite the vocative form of this much-disputed word, which indicates a -van suffix (see MacDonell, *V. Gr.*, p. 68, n. 5; cf. *ṛjīśvan*, a precisely similar formation), it seems clear that, as Grassmann points out, the Vedic poets divided the word into *mātari-* and *-śvan*, thus giving the meaning "in der Mutter (dem Reibholze) wachsend oder erstarkend." Yet the *original* significance could hardly have been other than which can be drawn from *mātariś + van*. Divine names usually have meaning; but here there is too great uncertainty. Whether Matarisvan = Vayu?

*ārejetām*: 3 dual imperf. In many religions the earth shakes at supernatural or "earth-shaking" events. Cf. RV 1, 151, 1 (Geldner). That Agni was "chosen," was "placed ahead," was "the forerunner" or "the foremost" is clear in the Agni hymns; but the action, it must be remembered, is continuous and eternal.

*hotṛ*: The root is *hu* "pour," not *hū* "invoke," although they may ultimately be related. Agni is the "outpouder"; he is also the "oblate."

*vūrye*: The length of the vowel gives the appearance of the root *vṛ* rather than *vr*, unless the parallel with *ūrṇa* is sound. The meaning, however, seems to be clear.

*mahó*: "The great ones"? Who offers what to whom is what the Vedas are about: it is likely that it is always the "sacrificer" who offers himself to the sacrifice.

4. Thou, O Agni, didst make the heavens resound for many-differentiated man, being more well-doing than [him] the well-doer; when by friction thou art released from thy parents, they led you around forward and back again.

*mānave*: For Manu: but I prefer "man": precisely as Adam is "man."

*purūrdvase*: A very familiar proper name and very hard to etymologize with certainty. It appears to mean something like "many 'wide's'": perhaps "much-extended, multiple." I associate it with *purūru* (others do not); and I consider the parallel with RV 8, 25, 16 (where the One and the Many again) very important: *ayām éka itthā purūru caṣṭe vi viśpātih*.

*anayan*: I have no explanation of the past tense in apodosis here; and I am not certain that it is an apodosis. For the significance: Sāyana gives a plausible ritualistic interpretation; there is also a possible reference to the sun's movement across the earth (cf. RV 10, 90, 5, cited by Coomaraswamy, *On the One and Only Transmigrant*, JAOS, Suppl., Vol. 64, no. 2, p. 27, n. 28); and there may likewise be the thought of the endlessness or circularity of creation in so far as birth and death are alike a *mokṣa*.

5. Thou, O Agni, who knowest the oblation completely and the Vasat-cry, who in the beginning wert motion alone, desirest to win stablishments, [thou] becomest the increase-promoting bull for the one who has extended the sacrificial instrument.

*yá āhutim*: I read the second verse as an adjective clause modifying the voc. *agne* in the first verse.

*ekāyur*: Geldner: "den Ayu als einzigen habend." Agreed: but for *āyu* see stanza 2 above.

6. O Agni who, in the clash of hero-bands, in the decisive conflict (*páritakmye dháne*), even with few slayest the more, thou, participated in the sacrificial place, helpest in companionship man upon the labyrinthine way (*vrjindavartaniṃ náram*).

*vicarṣaṇe* : "moving separated" : root, *car* + *vi*. In stanzas 5 and 6 Agni is described as 'év 'apχῆ pure motion ; then, externalized, as the guiding spirit, the friend, the *comes* of each man upon the labyrinthine way. See *jāgrviḥ* in stanza 9 below.

7. O Agni, who, thirsting, givest pleasure to both kinds of creatures and delight to the shining one (*sūri*), thou placest that mortal [part] in the highest immortality for glory every day.

*ubháyāya* Both sexes ; or human beings and other creatures ; for the latter, which is more likely, cf. RV 10, 37, 11 : *asmākaṃ . . . ubháyāya jānmane . . . dviṇpāde cátuṣpade*.

*jānmane* : If root *sū*, then "the creator." But possibly better "the shining one" κατ'ἐξοχῆν —the one transmigrant. If this is correct, then Agni is not the transmigrant, except as the apostle or forerunner, like John the Baptist in the Christian tradition.

8. Thou, O Agni, praising (*stāvāṇaḥ*), make us the splendoured singer for the furthering of thy gifts. May we, by the new activity of *karma*, together with the gods accomplish [what is to be done]. O heaven and earth, help us onward.

*stāvāṇaḥ* : Parallel to *tātyśāṇaḥ* in stanza 7. It is Agni who thirsts, Agni who praises creation, Agni (apparently) who acts. (But cf. the note at *sūri*, stanza 7 above). There is no reason, in any event, for reading *stāvāṇaḥ* as passive, since a proper passive form exists (RV 1, 107, 2).

*kārūṃ* : Make us the *singer*, when thou art *singing* ; us the *agent*, thou the *actor*.

*apāsā* : Instr. sing. neut. subst. A doubtful accent ; but no other reading seems more probable. I have left *karma* untranslated. The probable parallel with *vidmanāpasá* (adjective ; but with better accent) in stanza 1 should be observed. Perhaps the Maruts "active through knowledge" ; but man "active through works" ?

9. O Agni, thou immaculate (*anavadya*), alert for our sake in the womb of our ancestors, a god among the gods, the body-maker be, and the forethought for the singer. Thou, all wholeness, hast forth strewn all goodness.

*jāgrviḥ* : Agni is characteristically "alert" or "awake." Cf. RV 3, 26, 3 : *ásvo ná krándañ jānibhiḥ sám idhyate . . . agniḥ amṛteṣu jāgrviḥ* ; RV 9, 44, 3 : *ayám devéṣu jāgrviḥ sutá eti pavitra ā sómo yāti vicarṣaniḥ*.

*tanūkṛt* : Perhaps "threadmaker" in the sense of extending the thread of life.

*prámatīs* : Providence or forethought : the one actor.

*kārāve* : See the note on this word in stanza 8.

*ā ūpiṣe* : The root is *vap*. Middle voice !

10. Thou, O Agni, art the forethought, thou our father, thou the life-giver ; we are thy descendants. On thee, O thou impervious (*adābhya*), assemble by the hundreds and the thousands streams of [living] goodness, on thee the virtuous guardian of the divine will.

11. Thou, O Agni, the gods made the first moving one for the sake of motion, and the guardian of the place of those attached; they made libation-pouring the controller of mankind when of a father like me the son is born.

- āyu* : The awkwardness of the translation may serve to emphasize the idea of progression. The gods made Agni the first mover, around which the adscititious qualities would cling; but he is also the guardian of the established places (*viśpātīh*) when he has become Many. Cf. RV 8, 25, 16, quoted s.v. *purūrdvase* at stanza 4 above.
- nāhuṣasya* : Root *nah* "bind, join." But *nahu(s)* appears to mean "one adjoined or attached"; then *nahuṣa* is a transfer form, like *manuṣa* from *manu(s)*. It should mean "attachment" or "adjoined-ness." It is evidently to be distinguished from *manuṣa* in the second verse.
- iḷā* : Root *iṣ* "eine Flüssigkeit hervorspritzend" (Grassmann). Cf. RV 10, 94, 10.
- māmakasya* : "Of my kind." The poet speaks of himself. It should be noted then that this is the human birth of Agni; and that *iḷā* is naturally "the controller."

12. Thou, O Agni, O god, with thy watchers guard for us the potential and the actual. O adorable, thou art the bearer of the seed in the thread; and in the cattle unwinkingly [art] guarding in thy will.

- pāyūbbhir* : See stanza 13 s.v. *pāyu*.
- maghóno* . . .  
*tanvaś ca* : The sense is obscure: *tanu* is the thread of life, the extension of the lineage; *maghóno* I very doubtfully translate "potential" as opposed to the "actual."
- trātā* : "Saviour"; but the sense of "carrying over" is implicit. Cf. Hermes Chrophoros; Christopher.
- tokāsyā* : Sāyaṇa: "son"; Geldner: "seed."
- ānimeṣam* : Agni is always "awake." See the note s. v. *jāgrviḥ* in stanza 9.

13. O Agni, who, having poured out oblation for uninterrupted life, though the prayer be mental of the one pouring only, receivest it, thou art enkindled as the all-seeing inner guardian for the unattached sacrificer.

- vanóṣi* : The accent requires that this be read as the verb of a dependent clause; therefore I take the second verse as an adjective clause mod. Agni, himself the sacrificer. (Agni is the actor; the *kīri* is the agent. See stanza 8.)
- aniṣaṅgāya*  
*yājyave* : "For the sacrifice, or for the sacrificial one, which has nothing attached or clinging (*a + ni + saṅg*). I see no compelling reason for taking this to mean "unarmed" (Geldner: "unbewehrten opferer") and prefer to understand it to be the pure thread of life, "pure spirit," which is the *tanu* with no accidental qualities.
- avrkāya* : "Not split, not chopped or cut off (as a thread)"; therefore continuous. The oblation, the *iḷā*, of course continues the thread of life; it can be made without sacrificial intent: but if it is made with even mental prayer, it is made *by and for* Agni.
- dhāyase* : The form is causative; cf. Pischel and Geldner, V. S., 216.

- kīrés* : For the significance see *vanóṣi* above, this stanza ; and cf. RV 9, 44, 3, cited at stanza 9. For the form : root *kir* "sow, strew, pour out" rather than *kir* "sing."
- caturakṣá* : "Four-eyed ; or the four cardinal points of the compass" : at all events, "seeing on all sides" : therefore "all-seeing."
- pāyúr antaro* : "The inner guardian" : to be compared with those other "guardians" who (in stanza 12) watch over many things. Perhaps akin to the "inner guardian" of Socrates? The ethical spirit which predominates in Plato seems, however, not exactly equivalent to the purely metaphysical, or expository, spirit of the Rig-Veda.

14. O Agni, who welcomest for the far-famed singer the desired highest outpouring (*réknaḥ*), thou art called the foresight of even the poor ; as a father, thou guidest the childlike ; as the wiser one, thou controllest the directions [which it shall take.]

- vanóṣi* : The accent again, as in stanza 13, indicates a dependent clause ; and the syntax again is difficult.
- vāghāte*  
*uruśāñsāya* : The contrast to the mental prayer in stanza 13 should be noted.
- pākam* : "Childlike" : the contrast is to *pāyu*.

15. Thou, O Agni, protectest about on all sides like close-knit mail the man who has extended the . . . ; he who with . . . , a maker of a fastness in his dwelling place, offers himself a living sacrifice—he goes to the highest of the sky.

- prdyatadakṣiṇam* : I do not know what this means. I am not satisfied with any explanation I have yet seen.
- svāduksādmā* : I do not know what this means. "Having a pleasant axe or knife" ? I read it as a Bahuvrihi compound : one of that special class with accent on the second member, like *vibhukrátu* "having much strength." For a possible meaning, cf. RV 1, 25, 17 : *mādhū . . . kṣadase priyām* ; for a further meaning of *kṣadman*, cf. RV 1, 130, 4 : *vājram . . . kṣādmeva tigmām* ; and RV 3, 2, 10, where the sacrifice is like an axe.
- syona* : The root is *siv* "sew" : *syūta* "sewed, threaded, woven" ; cf. *syūtis* "lineage." *siv* / *syo* is in the same relationship as the more familiar *div* / *dyo* : i.e. *diāu* / *diu* : *siaū* / *sī-u* = *sīu* = *siv*. *Syona* would appear to be something threaded together, woven, fixed, or firm. The later meaning of "pleasure, happiness" may be appearing.

16. O Agni, make us forget this dichotomy in our natures, this way we have travelled from afar ; thou art friend, father, foreknowledge among the essences ; thou art the whirlwind and inspirer of the mortal parts.

- mīmṛṣo* : Aor. causative of *mṛṣ* ?
- śarāṇim* : A hapax in the RV. Apparently the root is *śar* "divide or split" : hence a division, a cutting (in two ?) : a dichotomy.
- bhīmir* : By the accent this should be a noun. It has been taken by some to be an adjective.
- ṛṣikṛt* : Grassmann : "Begeisterer."
- somyānām* : Apparently opposed to *mārtiyanām* : the "essential(s)" and the "mortal(s)."

17. With Manu, O Agni, with Angiras, O Angiras, with Yayati, with the former ones in thy resting-place, thou the pure, come hither, convey the divine generation, cause it to settle in the barhis ; and I will offer up the loved one.

- manuṣvād* : The sense of the stanza seems to be that of recapitulation of all generations in the divine creation ; but *manuṣvād*, *aṅgirasvād*, etc. may mean " like Manu," etc.
- yákṣi* : Probably inj. aor. 1 sing. : therefore a change of subject in the last sentence of the stanza.
- Yayāti* : In the myth (not in RV) of Yayāti, Puru (the Many) receives his age, and Y. (the Goer ?) remains eternally young.

18. Increase win, O Agni, by this prayer which we have made for thee according to our knowledge and ability ; lead us forward to the light and unite us with life-giving grace.

### Summary

In this hymn Agni is invoked as the foremost, the forerunner, the divine seer of the gods, the most active, the guardian of the divine will. He is latent everywhere ; he is in the womb of man's ancestors ; he is twice-born. He is the bearer of the seed, the prolonger of the thread of life ; he is awake in all creatures ; he is the father, mankind his descendants. He welcomes all worship, even though it be mental only. He is the good companion of man upon the labyrinthine way : he is inspiration and inspirer, inner guardian, and forethought.



## CHHĀNDOGYA UPANISHADS

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

“**T**HE breath is saturated, the eye is saturated, the sun is saturated, the heavens are saturated. Everything under the sky and under the sun is saturated.

Whence then is all that takes place saturated, herds, nourishment, strength, splendour, solemnity of Service ? ”

“ Viyana is saturated, the ear is saturated, the moon is saturated, the heavenly dominions are saturated. Everything beneath them and beneath the moon is saturated.

“ Whence then is all that takes place saturated, herds, nourishment, strength, splendour, solemnity of Service ? ”

“ Anana is saturated, the word is saturated, fire is saturated, earth is saturated. Everything under fire and earth is saturated.

“ Whence then is all that takes place saturated, herds, nourishment, strength, splendour, solemnity of Service ? ”

“ Samāna is saturated, spirit is saturated, vortices are saturated, the hurricane is saturated. Everything beneath the vortices in the hurricane is saturated.

“ Whence then is all that takes place saturated, herds, nourishment, strength, splendour, solemnity of Service ? ”

“ Udāna is saturated, air is saturated, space is saturated. Everything aerial and spatial is saturated.

“ Whence then is all that takes place saturated, herds, nourishment, strength, splendour, solemnity of Service ? ”

“ Whoever knowing this, serves Agnikhotra, serves in all worlds, in all that exists, in everything.”

“ As children huddle together around the mother, so do beings cluster around Agnikhotra—around Agnikhotra.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“ All has been spiritualized from the Subtlest Entity. This is the sole Reality. This is the Ātman.”

“ Verily, dead is the body, abandoned by the spirit. The spirit then does not die. All has been spiritualized by the Subtlest Entity. This is the sole Reality, this is Ātman.

“ Cast this salt in the water and return to me to-morrow morning.”

“ Taste now this water, what do you find ? ” “ It is salty.” “ Draw from this water more deeply, what do you find ? ” “ It is salty.” “ Taste it from the bottom. What do you find.” “ It is salty.” “ Taste again and come here to me.” “ It is all the same.” “ Thus, verily, my friend, you still do not notice the essence, yet it is everywhere.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Tell me all that you know, and I tell you what follows.”

“ I know the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sāma-Veda, the Atharva-Veda, the ancient sayings, the Veda of Vedas ; I know the ceremonials, I know calculations, the science of predictions, weather-forecasting, logic, the rules of behaviour, etymology, the

science of sacred texts, the science of arms, astronomy, the facts about the serpent and the djinn. That is what I know."

"All that you have enumerated is only words."

"Words—Rig-Veda and Yajur-Veda, and Sāma-Veda and Atharva-Veda and ancient sayings, and science of predictions, and knowledge of time, and logic, and the rules of behaviour, etymology, and the science of sacred texts, and the science of arms, and astronomy, and the science of the serpent and the djinn, all this is only words. Apprehend the proper understanding of words."

"When one understands in the words of Brahman, he can do all that he wishes within the power of these words."—"Teacher, tell this to me."

"It, the Word, is verily greater than all words. This Word enables one to understand the Rig-Veda, and the Yajur-Veda, and the Sāma-Veda and the Atharva-Veda and the ancient sayings, and grammar, and the rules of calculation, and the science of predictions, and knowledge of time, and logic, and the rules of behaviour, etymology, and science of sacred texts, and the science of arms, astronomy and the knowledge of the serpents and the djinn, heaven and the earth, air, ether, waters, the light-bearing quality of higher entities, people, animals, bires, plants, and trees—all creations even to the smallest, to the insects and to the ants, the righteous and the iniquitous, the true and the false, the good and the evil, the pleasant and the unpleasant. If the Word did not exist, neither the just nor the unjust would be cognized, neither true nor false, good nor evil, pleasant nor unpleasant, this word enables one to distinguish all. Apprehend the proper understanding of the Word."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Only when service takes place justly ; without sacrifice there will be no justice.

This alone makes Service just, but it is needful to wish to cognize Service.

Only when you feel an inner joy at service. He serves not who is in suffering.

Only in one who has been filled with joy does Service result : but it is needful to cognize joy.

"There is no joy without infiniteness. There is no joy in the finite. Joy is infinity. But it is needful to wish to cognize infinity."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Whoever strives to the peace world of fathers, with them will he also dwell. Surrounded by the peace world of fathers he may be happy. Whoever strives to the peace world of mothers, only to think, will also dwell with them. Surrounded by the peace world of mothers he will be happy."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The truly clear-sighted sees neither deaths nor diseases nor sufferings. The truly clear-sighted sees and everywhere he attains all."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Ātman, the sole true reality, is in the heart. This it is which explains the expression : It is in the heart. Day by day, he who knows this attains the heavenly peace world."

\* \* \* \* \*

The lofty spiritual mood in which a Hindu recites the words of the sacred tradition is something not easily forgotten. The poet Tagore whose sensitive heart is a storehouse of these great rhythms, knows how to evoke all their beauties.

In India when the verses of the Mahabharata, the Upanishads and the Puranās are being recited, then there is joy, despite of all troubles, and even if the modernization of India is inevitable, the beauty of such sacred poetry will live on for ever.

One is, of course, struck by the endless repetitions in the translation of such texts and yet, if one listens to the rhythmic periods of the original, one recognizes that they are an integral part of the melody. Such repetitions are often a way of laying stress on the most important passages. For centuries the Rig-Veda and the other sacred books were transmitted orally, and, in this, rhythmic repetition was a great aid to the memory.

If one considers the large number of philosophical and religious periodicals and books now published in India, one is forced to admire a people who cares so much for thought and culture. Such a virtue covers many defects and from the towering Himalayas to the burning South, there are plenty of signs which point in this direction.

From the poorest coolie to the most learned Hindu you will always meet with someone ready to converse with you on the most lofty subjects; and, after a short time you will come to realise that every Hindu, whatever be his personal way of life or that of the society to which he belongs, will always prefer to discuss lofty subjects, for these alone to him seem real.

Despite the confusion of to-day India still maintains her lofty tradition of teacher and disciple. The Guru still lives on and the relationship of Guru and disciple is always an edifying one. This noble and conscious cult of the teacher can hardly be found in other countries. There is nothing servile or belittling in it, no narrowing of outlook or loss of personality, for it is a noble recognition of the law of Hierarchy.

Even in the details of daily life the disciples will always respect the Teachers' dignity, a quality which can only be developed by mutual respect.

The Teacher is a father and adviser and a guide in all the events of life.

It is characteristic of the Guru to be concerned about the inner and outer program of his disciple, and the disciples, on their part, have many beautiful expressions which show their deep respect for the Guru. Belittlement, on their part is inadmissible, even in the smallest details, and they will make every endeavour to preserve, in their own minds, the essential character of the Teacher.

From this mutual understanding the art of thinking is born and joy arises around the comprehension of higher things; a joy not confined to palaces and temples but one which enters the poorest dwelling and transforms the burden of life into something easy.

He who knows India, not as the tourist or sightseer, but as one who has come in contact with the people and with the life of the great country, will never forget its charm.

And the heart of India will respond to all genuine sympathy. No words or assurances can compare with the judgment of the heart, which is something steadfast, something which can dive beneath the surface and recognize the essential.

In India, moreover, there is a remarkable psychic awareness so that if you glance at anyone, in a distant crowd, he will respond to your attention at once. This we have remarked not once or twice, but on many occasions.

Such a delicate sense of awareness is not to be acquired by any voluntary training.

It is the heritage of centuries of lofty thought and a natural characteristic of the race. In order to acquire the habit of lofty thought, one must come to prefer it to other ways of thought, in fact, one must rejoice in it, for, as we are told in the Upanishads, it is only through joy that our efforts can become effective.

This inner joy of the heart is something that we have to cultivate and learn how to

retain so that it takes up its abode in the heart, and this beneficent joy of the heart becomes a lasting power to disperse all the forces of darkness.

Whether we think of those sublime temples of Southern India, of the grandeur of Chittur and Gwalior and the great strongholds of Rajputana, or the solemn spirit of the Himalayas, everywhere we shall find the joy of great thoughts.

On the moon-lit Ganges, in the mystery of Benares seen at night, and in the great cadences of the Himalayan waterfalls, we shall find the same lofty sense of joy.

In the repetition of such ancient names as Manu, Arjuna, Krishna, of the Pandvas, Rishis, heroes, Creators and great constructors we recognize a loving respect for the past.

From the Mother of the World, from the Queen of Peace, we receive this delicate flower-like joy of the heart.

Marvellous India ! Splendid in outer beauty, most beautiful in its secret inner life.  
Beautiful, beloved India !

## THE BANNER OF INDRA

BY STELLA KRAMRISCH

"Ka imam dasabhirnamemdrām kṛṇāti dhenubhiḥ /  
Yadā vṛtrāṇi jamghanadathainam me punardadat." //

(R.V. IV. 24.10.)

"Mahe cana tvāmadrivaḥ parā śulkāya deyaḥ /  
Na sahasrāya nāyutāya vajrivo na śatāya śatāmagha."

(R.V. VIII. 1.5.)

THE two main places for paintings (citra) are wall (bhitti) and cloth (paṭṭa), the latter generally in the shape of a scroll or banner. The wall is the stationery and comprehensive place. Absolute Knowledge (kevala-jñāna) is compared<sup>1</sup> to the painted wall (citra-bhitti). Absolute knowledge is and comprises the Universe in its true nature and also its transformation in the manifoldness of all discernible appearances. The picture wall (citra-bhitti) similarly serves as a locus of manifestation of all objects of all times. Its white ground (saudha) is painted with many colours and each object can be discerned in its proper place. The painting is also likened to the mind and to discriminating knowledge (samvid; avabodha). The latter comparison is particularly made of the painting on cloth (citra-paṭṭa),<sup>2</sup> where things past, present and future are immediately visible at one moment. This "simultaneous narration" precipitates the contents of consciousness in a visual context; past, present and future have in it their balance.

It is asked, "... Is there anything so multifarious as the kind of painting called "caraṇa" ?" (*Atthasālinī*, para CCIII). Caraṇa means 'moving.' This has been explained as denoting paintings which are taken abroad by Brahman heretics on their travels (vi-caranti).<sup>3</sup> Forming part of a travelling exhibition, these paintings themselves were movable. Their subject too was "caraṇa" or conduct. They dealt with deeds and their rewards.

Similarly movable are the painted banners. They have moreover a movement of their own when agitated by the wind.

In Nepal, a painted banner is called "Prabhā," which means splendour or effulgence. Ābhāsa, which means shining forth, manifestation and thus also semblance, is a synonym for a painting.<sup>4</sup> The illuminated and illuminating quality belongs to the nature of a painting. As flag (dhvaja-paṭṭa) on a standard (dhvaja) it forms part of the entire banner. Another name for a banner is Ketu, 'ray of light.'<sup>5</sup> The origin of the banner and the prototype of the banner of Indra, the Indra-dhvaja, are given in its designation, Ketu. The legend of the banner of Indra tells of it.<sup>6</sup>

The Gods, unable to resist the children of Darkness, asked Brahmā to help them.

<sup>1</sup> *Pravacanasāra-Tattva-pradīpikā* I.60, a Jaina text with its commentary of the Xth century. Nirnaya-sagar Press, Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I.37.

<sup>3</sup> Coomaraswamy, *An Early Passage of Indian Painting, Figures of Speech*, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Coomaraswamy, *J.A.O.S.*, 1932; pp. 208-212.

<sup>5</sup> *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa*, *Brahmaparvan*, ch. CXXXVIII.

<sup>6</sup> *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, XLII. 1-7, 41-50.

Brahmā advised them to obtain from Viṣṇu the ensign at the sight of which the demons would not be able to resist them. Thereupon, the Gods with Indra went to the Milk-sea and Nārāyaṇa gave Indra the banner produced from Viṣṇu's lustre (tejas). By raising this standard Indra annihilated in battle the host of the enemy.

Nārāyaṇa, who abides in the waters, bestows the standard of Indra from the lustre of Mahā-Viṣṇu who is the Principle in whom dwells and who dwells in all existence (Nārāyaṇa-tattva).

The standard is part of Viṣṇu's luminosity and power ; it is a ray (ketu) of light and victory over the children of darkness. The banner was conveyed on an eight-wheeled fulgent chariot, a symbol of the day with its eight divisions (yāma) which carries the light from sunrise to sunset. When the standard was set up, the Gods decorated it with various ornaments.

The ornaments of the standard are referred to as 'ābharana',<sup>7</sup> 'bhūṣana',<sup>8</sup> and 'piṭaka'.<sup>9</sup> Abharana means ornament and amulet.<sup>10</sup> Amulets are power-filled objects which are portable and attachable ; they have their effect on the spot where they are fastened. The amulet is a container of magic power. Such containers—square, circular or polygonal in shape—of their own potency<sup>11</sup>—the gods presented to the Ketu, the standard. While the word 'bhūṣana' describes the gifts of the Gods as adornments of the standard, the word 'piṭaka' denotes a basket or box or an "ornament of the banner of Indra."

The powerful receptacles, the amulets whereby the Gods attach their own activity to the efficacy of the standard, are thirteen in number,<sup>12</sup> or eight.<sup>13</sup> These numbers would express the (13) months, symbolic of cyclical, lunisolar time, or the (8) directions symbolic of the extent of the manifest Universe.

The first of these becoming presents by which the standard is adorned is square in shape. It is given by Viśvakarman ; its circumference is one-third of the height of the standard.<sup>14</sup> The name of this adornment, in the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra, is 'Aindra' or also 'casket of Śakra' (Śakrapīṭaka). It is the foremost of the ornaments of Indra (Śakra). Indra is the Lokapāla, the Guardian of the East, the first of all the directions ; there the sun rises. The name of the first ornament is therefore also given as 'Lokapāla' (Bhaviṣya Purāṇa) and the Guardians of the four main directions, Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, and Kuvera should be established at its cardinal points. (Bhaviṣya Purāṇa and Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra).

The four-cornered ornament, produced by and consecrated to Viśvakarmā, the maker of the All, represents the extended Universe. In this receptacle the Universe is held ; it is the ornament proper of Indra.<sup>15</sup>

The next amulet adorning the Indradhvaja was given by Brahmā and Śiva ; it was

<sup>7</sup> *Brhat Samhitā*.

<sup>8</sup> *Brhat Samhitā* and *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (Uttara parvan, Ch. CXXXIX).

<sup>9</sup> *Brhat Samhitā*, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, XVII ; *Mahābhārata*, Ādiparvan, LXIV. 23-24.

<sup>10</sup> J. Gonda, 'Abharana,' in *New Indian Antiquary*, 1939, pp. 69-75.

<sup>11</sup> *Brhat Samhitā*, XLII, 49.

<sup>12</sup> *Brhat Samhitā* and *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*.

<sup>13</sup> *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*.

<sup>14</sup> According to *Brhat Samhitā* ; the *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra* describes it as a square of 2 Hastas, on the least variety of flag-staffs. This has a height of 24 Hastas ; the next size is 28 Hastas and the largest Indradhvaja is 32 Hastas high.

<sup>15</sup> The position of this Piṭaka on the flag-staff, the equation of Piṭaka with Ābharana, as an attribute 'brought near to' the object which it is to protect and adorn, the word 'piṭaka' itself, i.e., basket, all these seem to converge in one particular representation for which no explanation has been found hitherto, namely the object or basket which is being carried on a staff in procession on one of the Mohenjo-daro seals, and which almost invariably is placed near to the 'one-horned' animal on seals showing the likeness of this animal.



a vary-coloured girdle representing the cycles of time. Thus the various Gods bestow their own nature within the respective *Ṭīṭaka*. Its shape is round in more than one case. The God of Air gives the sixth ornament ; it is described as an armlet of peacock-feathers (*Br̥hat Saṃhitā*), or beautiful as a bubble (*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*). Skanda, Soma and Sūrya similarly also the Year, Moon and Sun, contribute round adornments which hold cycles of time.

The third ornament which Indra himself contributes to his standard is octagonal, a symbol of all the directions. Adorned with the cycles of time, and with symbols of the extended Universe, the *Indradhvaja* extends beyond them. They are arrayed on its shaft, one above the other, decreasing in size by an eighth.

The *Br̥hat Saṃhitā* does not describe in detail the flag (*paṭṭa*) of the *Indradhvaja* but summarily speaks of the umbrella, streamer, mirror, etc., which further adorn the ensign of Indra (v. 57). It is full of power and thus a form of *Śakti*. The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* tells that the Gods, *Brahmā* and the rest, who having installed the banner above *Mahā-Meru*, worshipped it as a Goddess, offering her their respective ornaments. The banner is further adorned (*Br̥hat Saṃhitā*) with figures of snakes, lions and the images of the Guardian gods, on the *Ṭīṭakas* and possibly also painted on the flag.

The *Mahābhārata* (*Ādiparvan*, ch. LXIV) tells of Vasu, the King of Cedi. This righteous and powerful king, by practising austerities, threatened to occupy the position of Indra, the King of Gods. Indra then made with him the covenant : " As Indra rules over the Gods, so will Vasu be the ruler of men on earth and uphold righteousness (*dharma*) amongst them. He will be cognisant of all the happenings in the world while staying in his place. For this purpose the huge celestial chariot (*vimāna*) made of crystal was given to the King ; while residing in it he would travel through the air (i.e., be aware of everything), as the Gods do to whom all is known. Indra then gives King Vasu his lotus garland and seals the covenant by bestowing on Vasu his standard, the staff (*yaṣṭi*) of bamboo, called *Vaijayantī* or *Indramātā*.

Vasu, the sky-traveller, knowing and thus ruling over all happenings on earth, worships the banner of Indra and installs it by celebrating a great festival.<sup>16</sup>

Indra, in his celestial chariot, drawn by the horses of heaven, graced the festival by his presence and declared that the Kings who perform the festival in the same manner as King Vasu will be victorious and their behests will be obeyed on earth, rain will not fail in their kingdom and all the plants will grow there. The people will be contented. The banner also forbodes what evil or good consequences will befall on mankind.

The ensign (*Dhvaja*) or staff (*yaṣṭi*) of Indra is the ray (*ketu*) of *Mahāviṣṇu*'s luminosity. A beam of the splendour of the great All-God is the standard of the King of Gods ; it is the staff or ' sceptre ' which he bestows on the king on earth as token of the covenant between the ruler in heaven and the ruler of men on earth. It is a symbol of *Dharma* ; each of the rulers upholds it in his place ; Indra upholds the cosmic order, and Vasu, law and righteousness amongst men.

<sup>16</sup> In the month of *Mārgaśīrṣa*, in the white fortnight, the asterism being *Maghā*, according to the *Mahābhārata* ; whereas the *Br̥hat Saṃhitā* gives the 12th of the bright half of *Bhādrapada* as the proper date, whether the asterism of the date be *Śravaṇā* or another.

In the month of *Āśvin*, in the bright half, the star being *Śravaṇā*, the banner should be raised on the tenth day ; in the asterism of *Rohiṇī*, the *Śakradhvaja* is lowered every year, according to the *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra* (verse 197) whereas the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* describes the installation of the banner in every 12th year only, if the installation was flawless (*Uttaraparvan*, ch. CXXXIX. 31) and *Br̥hat Saṃhitā* (XLII. 67) enjoins that the erected standard must be removed after having been worshipped during four days. These variations are accounted for by the differences in date and place of the texts.

The standard, as described in the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra, is set up on a Vāstumaṇḍala of eighty-one squares,<sup>17</sup>—the Royal magic diagram and site plan. The side of the squares measures sixty-four cubits<sup>18</sup> and the height of the staff should be half this measure. The correlation of the site and the object built or raised on it is as scrupulously observed in temporary erections as it is in buildings of a durable nature.

Then the standard is decorated by a skilled person, with the same ornaments which the Gods had affixed when it was first set up. When the flag is being hoisted and installed, the King recites the Mantra, the incantation of Indra :

“ Even as thou, O source of vigour, hast been honoured with manifold sublime ornaments by Śiva, Sūra, Yama, Indra, Soma, Kuvera, Agni, Varuna, the host of Sages, the Apsarās, Śukra, Aṅgiras, Skanda and the host of Winds so mayest Thou now, O God, graciously accept these beautiful ornaments. Thou art the Unborn, Imperishable Eternal, One only (Ekarūpa), Viṣṇu in the shape of Varāha—the boar,—Viṣṇu Purāṇa-Puruṣa,—the Principial Supreme Being ; Thou art Death, the all destroying Fire, thousand-headed Virāj, Indra of a hundred sacrifices, praised by all.

I invoke Indra (who is) Brahmā (Kavi), Agni (the seven-tongued), the Sun (Savitṛ), the All-protector, Lord of Gods, Śakra, killer of Vṛtra, and Viṣṇu (Suṣeṇa). May our warriors be victorious.”

(Bṛhat Saṃhita, XLII. 42f.)

The banner of Indra is invoked as Indra, the ruler of Gods, and thus tri-une as Prajāpati—Viṣṇu (Varāha) and Śiva, manifest divinity (Virāj) produced from Mahā-Viṣṇu's radiance.

“ Indra is worshipped in the shape of the standard (yaṣṭi) which Vasu received ” (Mahābhārata, Ādiparvan, LXIV.).

The standard is Indra ; the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra thus describes how Śakra (Indra) or Vajrin (the bearer of the thunder-bolt, i.e., Indra) should be joined with all its parts, the posts, etc., and how, before being hoisted it should be laid on its bed, with its point to the East (verses 87, 78).

The Rg Veda IV, 17.4, thus describes the maker of Indra as a most skilful workman (“ Indrasya kartā svapastamo bhūt ”).<sup>19</sup>

In the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra (XVIII. 3-4), Brahmā ordains that the banner should be raised on a Yantra, a magic diagram, with ‘ abhicāra mantras,’ incantations that inflict harm and injury on the enemies. It should be carried by hundreds of birds before the army of the Gods and thus they would defeat their foes. Similarly, the standard was not only set up as stationary and worshipped, but it was carried as a magic device—a mascot—in battle against the enemy. Its protective and victory-promoting value was great and thus Rg Veda VIII. 1.5, remonstrates : “ O thunderbolt-bearing Indra ! We do not sell thee even at a large price ; O Vajra-bearer ! not even for thousands or ten-thousands of riches ; O possessor of many treasurers, not even in exchange of untold wealth ! ”

Rg Veda IV. 24.10, however asks more accommodatingly : “ Who will buy this, my Indra, for ten cows ? When he has slain his foes, he may give him back to me.”

The lending or selling of this magic working emblem of Power does not detract from its efficacy. It appears that each time it was put into action, it had to be decorated afresh

<sup>17</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> On the significance of these numbers, see *ib.* pp. 46-7.

<sup>19</sup> An explicit description of the mechanism of the Standard and the manner of setting it up is given in the *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*.

—the Power of the Gods had to be attached to it and it was imbued with its pristine effectiveness by the recitation of the Mantra of Indra.<sup>20</sup>

Each happening in the course of raising the standard is portentous, each inclination of the ensign ominous. The respective strength and beauty added to the flag-staff by the ornaments, the Piṭakas, is further increased by the paintings, on the cloth of the flag. "The cloth of the banner should be beautifully painted and well made in order to show the omens of the King's subjects as well as the splendour of the banner; the whole world with its cities, towns and gardens, Gandharvas, Gods and Titans, its mountains and trees, all these should be depicted on the canvas of the flag" (Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra, XVII, 101-2). "If the cloth of the banner is painted with pictures of Gods, Yakṣas and Lords of Nāgas of varied and beautiful shape, their weapons, ornaments, and conveyances; with (the figures of) the eight guardians of the Regions, dancing Apsarās, the Stars and the Planets; with clouds and rivers full of clear water, seas, ponds covered with lotus flowers and lakes with swans; glades and gardens in bloom and bearing fruit; with temples, forts and large gates; with towns and gleaming white houses furnished with couches, seats and the rest; if further the king (is painted) glad at heart and his servants (happy) his forces and vehicles, the citizens and folks, the children cheerful at play, all the four castes in a happy frame of mind, if dancers, actors and artisans are painted, and the hills with herds of cattle, many creepers, herbs and trees of all kinds, all the auspicious animals and birds, all the good things (of life), various lovely banqueting places, and birds eating fruits; when all these look beautiful (painted in their respective colours and positions) in their proper place, in country and town, it will bring prosperity, health and plenty of all things in the land and victory to the king. (Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra, XVII. 180-87).

<sup>20</sup> *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Uttara Parva, ch. CXXXIX. 34, enjoins that, should the banner fall down or break, a figure (rūpaka) of Indra should be made in gold—and one should raise the banner again. The substitution of the emblem by a representation made of gold shows the equivalence of these two modes of things made by art. Purification, an undoing of the mishaps, is expressed by the golden—the pure—substance of the figure.

## WAYFARING

BY MISS I. B. HORNER (ENGLAND)

THE Way is one of the finest symbols found in Early Buddhism. And although this teaching borrowed the symbol from earlier traditions, it did much here, as with other conceptions, to impose its own interpretations. Mrs. Rhys Davids wrote with much emphasis that the Way was not originally eightfold, but was a Way through the worlds "for a gradual becoming along a More towards a final Most."<sup>1</sup> This "Most" is perhaps not very dissimilar to *kṛta* which Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, in his analysis of five verses occurring in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>2</sup> asserts to be "our traveller's goal."<sup>3</sup> "The pilgrimage is a procedure from potentiality to act, non-being to being, darkness to light . . . and can be expressed in familiar terms by saying that he [the traveller] is on his way to become a *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt* ('one who has performed the whole task,' BG. IV. 18) and *kṛtakṛtyah* ('one who has done what there was to be done,' Aitareya Āraṇyaka, II. 5, Maitri Up. II. 1 and VI. 30)." To which may be added the *kata karanīya* of the Pali canon, and which occurs not only in one of the formulae of arahantship, but in other unstereotyped passages as well.

Thus the Most, *kṛta* and *kata* are terms for the goal of travellers on the Way. In various other articles Dr. (and Mrs.) Coomaraswamy have also considered more aspects of the Way, including the important one of its being a Way not only over land but over water as well. When this is the case, the Way may appear as a bridge, boat, raft or ford<sup>4</sup> for crossing to the further shore (not for going up-stream to the source or down to the sea<sup>5</sup>) and always as a tightrope.<sup>6</sup>

Water symbolism is probably more impressive than land symbolism: the dangers besetting the traveller can be more terrifying; the implications of what it means to cross over from the hither to the further shore can be more definitely conveyed. Water, besides dividing, also unites the here to the beyond, the hither to the further, the swamps to the dry land, the fears this side, or the doubts, to the fearlessness or undoubtingness yonder. The object of crossing the deeps and whirlpools is of course to get to the safety that lies the other side and to escape from the fears this side. I think that the reasons for crossing water, be it ocean, deeps, floods or rivers, can be more strikingly stated than can those for treading the land way, because water divides in a way that land does not.

But this is largely a question of terminology. Once we realise that "all the detailed symbolisms of the Bridge, the Voyage and the Pilgrimage" derive from various conceptions of the Way,<sup>7</sup> we can fully understand that successful travelling on the Way (land or water) forms part of the "epic of the victory over death,"<sup>8</sup> over differentiation and separation from That One (*taḍ ekam*) Who we are.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids, *A Manual of Buddhism*, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pilgrim's Way*, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, 1937, Part IV.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. D. L. Coomaraswamy, *The Perilous Bridge of Welfare*, *HJAS*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Aug., 1944.

<sup>5</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Some Pali Words*, *HJAS*, Vol. 4, No. 2, July, 1939, p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 198, n. 7; p. 213.

<sup>7</sup> A. K. C., *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8.

The "call to Everyman . . . to keep on going until the 'end of the road' (*advanaḥ pāram*, Kaṭha Up. III. 9) is reached"<sup>10</sup> is not confined to brahmanical literature. As Dr. Coomaraswamy remarks, "the motif of a going forth (*āgārad abhiniskrāntaḥ* . . . *parivrajat*, Manu, VI. 41)" is universal,<sup>11</sup> and the reason for doing so is to seek "a way of escape from the death to which we are appointed at birth."<sup>12</sup> This may be effected "by a resort to Agni (so often described in the Vedas as the 'Pathfinder' *par excellence*) and by the performance of the offices which he enjoins."<sup>13</sup> This would suggest that Agni not only finds the Path, but points out how it may be followed, two aspects of wayfaring that may be paralleled in Pali literature. Moreover Indra is the "traveller's companion" or comrade in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII. 15. Dr. Coomaraswamy has reminded us that Gotama is referred to by Indra's name of Sakka, *Sn. passim*,<sup>14</sup> and he has also brought forward convincing arguments to show that "the Buddha is Brahma, Prajāpati, the Light of Lights, Fire or Sun, or by whatever other name the older books refer to the First Principle; and to show that insofar as the Buddha's 'life' and deeds are described, it is the doings of Brahma as Agni and Indra that are retold."<sup>15</sup>

"To find the Self," the ageless, undying Self,<sup>16</sup> is another way of putting the goal of every wayfarer. Union with the Self, possible after deliverance from Māra,<sup>17</sup> death, has been achieved, is what is desired—and what is still desired in India as witness the thousands of men who, entering the fourth *āshram*, give up their careers and, going to lonely hermitages, seek to make a reality of this union. It is indeed true that we must "recognize that all scripture without exception requires of us in positive terms to know our Self and by the same token to know what-is-not-our-Self but mistakenly called a 'self'."<sup>18</sup>

Enough has now been said to show that Dr. and Mrs. Coomaraswamy's articles make it abundantly clear that symbolic conceptions of the Way and of the aspects it assumes according as it is regarded as a water way or as a land route for going to the beyond<sup>19</sup> are older than the Pali canon. Yet, it is just because the canon in this respect, among others, falls into line with the older traditions that it can claim a place in the *Philosophia Perennis*. And in putting forward these claims and showing how the material which supports them fits in with and carries on the older traditions, Dr. Coomaraswamy is rendering Early Buddhism a very great service. If there still exist any supposition that this teaching is one which borrowed nothing from and was in complete independence of preceding and contemporary Indian thought, such views must dissolve in the light shed by Dr. Coomaraswamy on the many cases where the symbolism of Early Buddhism runs true to a type that was already part and parcel of Indian thought.

The object of this paper is chiefly to adduce evidence from the canon in support of the first part of Dr. Coomaraswamy's statement: "The Way must be followed by the Forerunner's footprints, as the word for 'Way' itself reminds us, by all who would reach the 'farther shore' of the luminous spatial river of life that divides this terrestrial from

<sup>10</sup> *The Pilgrim's Way*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. Pali: *agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajati*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. Pali: *agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajati*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8, n. 1. And see the detailed exposition by C. E. Godage, *The Place of Indra in Early Buddhism*, Ceylon University Review, April, 1945, Vol. III, No. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> *AV*, X. 8. 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Dhp.* 274.

<sup>18</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> *Sn.* 1130.

yonder celestial strand."<sup>20</sup> It may be said at once that although the way may be pointed out and described, in the last resort progress is in the main due to the traveller's own desire and determination to go forward "on a road made by himself"<sup>21</sup>: no one is a doer, agent, for another.<sup>22</sup> Without shrinking back, but struggling on, that which is not yet won may be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving, if there be an uprising, a vortex, of energy.<sup>23</sup> Without energy, *virīya*, it is impossible to attain the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realise the unrealised.<sup>24</sup> That is why the teaching lays such continual stress on energy, on stirring it up and the output of it. It is quite fundamental to any serious undertaking. To be sluggish and lethargic gets one nowhere. Earnestness and diligence are essential to the long hard striving, *padhāna*. "So be thou earnest, Pingiya"<sup>25</sup>; "Let a man train ever earnestly"<sup>26</sup>; "Those earnest, self-resolute in my behest . . . shall go where none do grieve"<sup>27</sup>—and this last in spite of Death, Māra or Namuci. This last quotation should be read perhaps in conjunction with another *Suttanipāta* verse,<sup>28</sup> one of those spoken by Gotama to the farmer Bhāradvāja in the famous ploughing talk: "My team in yoke, energy, goes along carrying security from the bondage (or yoke) (of the senses), nor turns it back—it goes where none do grieve."

It is apparent from the words "in my behest" that those who do the lord's bidding, *mama sāsana-kārakā*, or *sattḥu sāsana-kārīno*,<sup>29</sup> can, in the first place, only do so because he has stated what it is and has given guidance and instruction in it. They must, in the second place, call up energy and earnestness. It is further apparent that the aim is to go where there is no more grief and sorrow. At this side of the deeps, *aṇṇava*, the rivers and floods, *ogha*, at this end of the Way is "all the ill that is denoted by the word 'mortality'".<sup>30</sup> Beyond, at the other side, at Way's end is welfare, deathlessness,<sup>31</sup> the cool (*nibbāna*) which is the destruction of passion, hatred and confusion,<sup>32</sup> the coolness which when one has gained indifference to (*upekkhā*) the pleasure and pain of sensations and the security from their bondage (*yogakkhema*). All this can take place here and now; *nibbāna* is a state of mind, not a place to be enjoyed on the breaking up of the body after dying.

Verses in the *Suttanipāta*<sup>33</sup> speak of the "Way-conqueror" (*maggajīna*), of the "shower of the Way" (*maggadesin*),<sup>34</sup> and of "him who lives in the Way" (*magge jīvati*) or the "way-liver" or "wayfarer" (*maggajīvin*). These verses say:<sup>35</sup>

Immune to barbs, doubt crossed,  
Delighting in the Cool,  
Naught coveting, the guide  
Of world and gods: the Wake  
Call him Way-conqueror.

<sup>20</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> *Sn.* 514, *pajjena katena attanā*; *SnA.* ii. 425 explains by *bhāvītena maggena*.

<sup>22</sup> *Thag.* 542.

<sup>23</sup> *A.* i. 50, *S.* ii. 28.

<sup>24</sup> *S.* ii. 29, *A.* iii. 101.

<sup>25</sup> *Sn.* 1121, 1123.

<sup>26</sup> *Sn.* 934; *S.* i. 193, *Thag.* 1245.

<sup>27</sup> *Sn.* 445.

<sup>28</sup> *Sn.* 79.

<sup>29</sup> *A.* ii. 26, *It.*, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> *amataphalā*, *Sn.* 80.

<sup>32</sup> *S.* iv. 251.

<sup>33</sup> *Sn.* 86-88.

<sup>34</sup> *Cf. RV.* V. 46. 1, *vidvān pathaḥ pura-etā neṣati*.

<sup>35</sup> The translation is from E. M. Hare's *Woven Cadences, Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. XV, 1945.



## WAYFARING

Who yondmost as yondmost  
Here knows, who Dharma here  
Proclaims, explains : still sage,  
Doubt-cutter, him they call  
Way-herald, second monk.

Who liveth in the Way,  
The well-taught Dharma-path,  
Alert, restrained, and treads  
The blameless paths : third monk,  
Wayfarer him they call.

Several are the implications of the accomplishments achievable by these three exponents of the Way : the Way-conqueror is so called by Awakened Ones, *buddhas* : doubt is here the thing to be crossed or cut—cutting and the implied knife or sword being sometimes symbolical of deliverance<sup>36</sup>; the barb or dart (of the pleasures of the senses) must be drawn, for :

From realm to realm runs he  
Who by that barb is pierced—  
But he who draws that barb  
Runs not nor sinketh down,<sup>37</sup>

that is into the water; the Way-conqueror, having himself done the journey, knows what it entails. The Way-herald, when he knows the highest (*paramam*) as the highest, explains and proclaims *dhamma here (idh'eva)* ; while the wayfarer lives mindful and restrained in the well-taught *dhamma* path, *dharmapada*. There are thus three stages or categories for those who have to do with the Way : conquering it, teaching it which is teaching *dhamma*, and following it which is following *dhamma*.

As is brought out in a passage in the *Samyutta*,<sup>38</sup> Gotama came to see the Way, and he taught his disciples what he had learnt so that they too would have the chance to go along it : " Even so have I, monks, seen an ancient way, an ancient road, traversed by the Wholly Awakened Ones of olden times. . . . Along that have I gone ; as I was going along it I came to know about old age and dying, birth, becoming, grasping, craving, feeling, touch, the spheres of the six senses, individuality, consciousness and the components, with their uprising, their stopping and the course leading to their stopping. I taught that which I had come to know to monks, nuns, men and women lay followers, that is to say this Brahma-faring." This is a clear statement that Gotama " sees " the Way of the former Buddhas, that he goes along it without any external help, making the journey perhaps by his own recollection<sup>39</sup> of what is true and real, finding that what he " remembers " he knows, and teaching this to his fourfold band of disciples. Gotama, as the Buddha of this buddha-age or *kappa* (Sanskrit *kalpa*), as a One-thus-come (*tathāgata*), a perfected one (*arahant*), " causes a Way to arise that had not arisen before ; he brings about a Way not brought about before ; he proclaims a Way not proclaimed before ; he is knower of the Way, understander of the Way, skilled in the Way. And his disciples are now wayfarers who follow after him. This is the distinction between an awakened one (*buddha*) and a monk who is freed by wisdom."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> As of the delivery of a child ; see *Vin.* i. 342 where the queen before she gave birth to her child wanted " to drink at the washing of the swords." But cutting sometimes means crossing, as *sotam chetvā*, *M.i.* 226.

<sup>37</sup> *Sn.* 939.

<sup>38</sup> *S.* ii. 106.

<sup>39</sup> On this subject, see A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Recollection, Indian and Platonic*, Supplement to *JAOS* Vol. 64, No. 2, 1937.

<sup>40</sup> *S.* iii. 66 ; cf. *M.* iii. 8.

Again it is said that the Way is taught by a *buddha* to each one who asks or seeks, *pañhassa*<sup>41</sup>:

Whoso should walk as taught the Wake to each  
Who sought, would go from the not-beyond to the beyond;  
And making the Way supernal to become,  
They to the beyond from the not-beyond would go.

And yet again, Gotama, in trying to make a brahman understand why some of his disciples reach the Cool and some do not, emphasises the point, as the records show,<sup>42</sup> that he is a foreteller, or shower, of the Way, *maggakkhāyin*, and, as is implied, he must leave the journey itself, and its success or failure, to the travellers: "Brahman, the Cool exists, the way to it exists, I exist as an adviser. Yet, although some of my disciples, being advised and instructed by me, succeed in winning the Cool, the ultimate goal, some do not. What can I do in this matter? Foreteller of the Way, brahman, is a One-thus-come." Or, as it is put in the *Dhammapāda*, "Shown surely was that Way by me<sup>43</sup>; Ones-thus-come (but) show the Way<sup>44</sup>; by *you* it is that ardour is to be worked."<sup>45</sup> Thus this Way that is "this Brahma-faring" has been trodden by Gotama as by the preceding Buddhas or Awakened Ones, enlightened ones, the world's teachers: "This is the Way followed by Great Selves, by Great Seers,"<sup>46</sup> *eso maggo mahattehi anuyāto mahesino*.

Those who proceed along it, doers of the teacher's bidding, will make an end of ill.<sup>47</sup> There is no doubt that "this is the Way for attaining Brahma,"<sup>48</sup> *so maggo brahmapattiyā*, Brahman who stood for and symbolised the Undying, deathlessness or immortality, no less than *dhamma*. And it is true or very *dhamma*, *saddhamma*, that the Wake—past, future and present—have honoured, will and do honour.<sup>49</sup> It is *dhamma* that Brahmā Sahampati, when urging Gotama to teach it, called "this door to the deathless."<sup>50</sup> Just as the unborn, undying Brahman is equated with *dhamma* in at least one noteworthy passage: "belonging to *dhamma* and belonging to Brahma, *dhamma*-become and Brahma-become,"<sup>51</sup> so are Gotama the Buddha and *dhamma* equated at another no less noteworthy passage: "He who sees *dhamma* sees me, he who sees me sees *dhamma*."<sup>52</sup> This is the Way's end: "to become what-we-are,"<sup>53</sup> that is Brahma (or Buddha<sup>54</sup>) and all that this term implies of perfection, of having done, finished what was to be done. This Brahma is what arahants become,<sup>55</sup> and also those who torment neither themselves nor others, they live in this very life with a self that has become Brahma<sup>56</sup> (*brahma-bhūtena*).

Māra, Namuci or Death is at this end of the Way, tempting us with his lures of pleasures of the senses not to set out on the Way, and binding those who do not do so to a long long faring on and running on in death and birth. But from Māra and his wiles and snares there is an escape: "There is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, incomposite, and were it not for this unborn, unbecome, unmade, incomposite, no escape could be shown here from birth, becoming, making, composition."<sup>57</sup> The escape is to be made by taking to the Way which, in the First Utterance attributed to Gotama, is called the middle course<sup>58</sup> between two *antā* which, because they lead nowhere of any lasting or

<sup>41</sup> Sn. 1129, 1130

<sup>42</sup> Dhṛp. 276.

<sup>43</sup> A. ii. 21; cf. S. i. 140.

<sup>44</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup> It., p. 57, *brahmabhūtaṃ tathāgataṃ buddhaṃ*.

<sup>46</sup> S. iii. 83.

<sup>47</sup> M. iii. 6.

<sup>48</sup> A. ii. 26, It., p. 28-29.

<sup>49</sup> Vin. i. 5.

<sup>50</sup> A. ii. 206.

<sup>51</sup> Dhṛp. 275.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> D. iii. 84.

<sup>54</sup> Ud. 80.

<sup>55</sup> Dhṛp. 276.

<sup>56</sup> S. iv. 118.

<sup>57</sup> S. iii. 120.

<sup>58</sup> Vin. iii. 10.

spiritual value, might be called dead-ends. It is possible that the prototype for these two dead-ends is to be found in the *Suttanipāṭa*<sup>59</sup>: "And curbing all desire for either course (*antā*)," "Who here directs his thoughts to neither course." Other dead-ends, opposites or extreme views through which there is a middle (way) appear in the *Samyutta*.<sup>60</sup> Here the opposing, and false, views held by some heretics that "everything exists" and "everything exists not" are called *antā*.

However the conception of a middle way arose,<sup>61</sup> there is little doubt that the *anta* can be paralleled by the *kummagga* and *ummagga*, the devious and false, wrong ways elsewhere spoken of.<sup>62</sup> There is also the term *micchāmagga* for the false way.<sup>63</sup> It is said that when the way divides into two paths the left-hand one should not be taken for it is the wrong way.<sup>64</sup> That to the right is the one to take for it leads at last to a delightful stretch of level ground—and this is a name for *nibbāna*, the Cool. Elsewhere<sup>65</sup> the left-hand road appears again as the wrong road, *ummagga*, and is here said to go westwards. It is the *Eastern* quarter that in Pali literature is sometimes depicted as the most important or auspicious one.<sup>66</sup>

From these two passages (S. iii. 109, M. iii. 5) it would appear that because the Way divides into two, mistakes in wayfaring are possible. A man who has gone forth, *pabbajita*, may waver and return to the low life (of the householder), *hīnayāvattati*, for unless he is energetic and strives hard he is not necessarily bound to reach the end of the Way. No, it is those who have fought their fight in everything who can fare along, their burden laid down and wholly freed.<sup>67</sup>

The Way, although spoken of as dividing into two, is also spoken of as "straight," *uju*, *ujuka*, or better perhaps, "direct." "'Straight' is this Way called—leading the woman or the man who goes on it in the chariot that runs not crookedly (*akujana*) even to the Cool."<sup>68</sup> The direct way, *ujumagga*, is in accordance with brahman tradition as this is found in the Pali canon. The *Tevijja Suttanta* records<sup>69</sup> that two brahmans were talking about the true and the false way, *magga*, or what was the Way and what was not. They are reputed to say in turn: "This only, *eva*, is the direct Way, the straight course, bringing whoever goes out by it to companionship with Brahman"; and it was foretold or shown, *akkhāta*, by one or other of various brahman teachers. Again, according to Pali records of brahmanical teaching: "This is the Way, the Way that's straight, *this* the Way supreme, *dhamma* itself, guarded by those who are good; it is for uprising in the Brahma-world."<sup>70</sup>

We may ask whether we find in the Pali texts anything equivalent to Indra as "the traveller's companion." Who, or what was it, indeed was there anything that accompanied the pilgrims on their journey? In the first place, it was not for nothing, as Mrs. Rhys Davids has remarked, that Gotama was called "leader of the caravan." But it is not he, embodied, "Gotama the man," who goes with the traveller. Yet it may be possible to regard the Buddha as the traveller's companion. Dr. Coomaraswamy points out, and gives several pertinent canonical passages to support him, that "there can be no doubt whatever of the equations *dhamma* = *brahma* = *buddha* = *attā*: as in BU. II. 5. 11

<sup>59</sup> Sn. 778, 801. I am indebted to Mr. Hare for drawing my attention to this point.

<sup>60</sup> S. ii. 17.

<sup>61</sup> It was probably not "a new feature" in the teaching, Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Wayfarer's Words*, i. 170.

<sup>62</sup> *Thag.* 1242 = S. i. 193; S. iv. 195; Sn. 736; *It.*, p. 117; A. ii. 14, iii. 420, v. 145.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *kummagga micchāmagga* at *Vbh.* 145.

<sup>64</sup> M. iii. 5.

<sup>65</sup> S. i. 33.

<sup>66</sup> S. v. 134.

<sup>67</sup> D. i. 235.

<sup>68</sup> S. iii. 109.

<sup>69</sup> Sn. 914, 1078.

<sup>70</sup> D. ii. 246

*ayaṃ dharmaḥ . . . ayaṃ ātmā idaṃ amṛtaṃ idaṃ brahma idaṃ sarvaṃ.*"<sup>71</sup> A new meaning may thus be given to the exhortation: "Live you (*viharatha*) therefore having Self as light and refuge and none other, having *dhamma* as light and refuge and none other."<sup>72</sup> For if self and *dhamma* are equivalent to *buddha*, then one is being enjoined to have the Buddha as one's lamp and refuge: as refuge from the dangers of the Way, as light to guide one and encourage one forward, the light which is the Self and which fails not although other lights have gone out.<sup>73</sup>

I would suggest going even further and say that in the well known *Dīgha* passage just quoted we should no longer translate *viharati* as "live" but as "fare" or "walk." And for this the *Vibhanga*<sup>74</sup> and *Niddesa*,<sup>75</sup> not to mention the whole trend of Early Buddhist thought, give good support. For the synonyms they supply for *viharati* are *iriyati vattati pāleti yapeti yāpeti carati*. All these are verbs of motion meaning much the same thing: to move, to fare or proceed, to go on, to keep going, to make (oneself) keep going, to go. We should therefore get: "Fare (or, keep on going)"<sup>76</sup> with Self and *dhamma* for light and refuge."

The pilgrim, once he has set forth, is therefore perhaps not entirely bereft of a leader. His own knowledge is required, his *suta*, what he has heard, and his pondering it over and mastering it, as the texts sometimes say. He may then find he has *dhamma* as leader and teacher, as it was told monks by Gotama was to be the case after he was gone<sup>77</sup>: "Whatever *dhamma* (and discipline) has been taught and laid down by me, that is your teacher after I am gone."

If *buddha* and *dhamma* are equivalent, Gotama's words to Tissa—spoken immediately after the Teacher has told him how a man skilled in the Way would describe the right way to take to a man unskilled in the Way—would seem to imply that he would be with Tissa, or the wayfarer, as his companion on the journey: "Be of good cheer, Tissa. I shall exhort you, I shall help you, I shall instruct you."<sup>78</sup>

And to take one more example: there are four verses in the *Dhammapada*<sup>79</sup> concerned with a man setting out on the journey that will lead him to Yama's presence. But he can avoid this if he is quick to strive and makes of the Self a lamp or light, *dīpa*, as Gotama is said to have claimed to have made of it his refuge.<sup>80</sup>

Do you make of the Self a lamp,  
endeavour swiftly, wise become.  
With flaws blown out, corruptions gone,  
you'll come to devas' worthy plane.

you'll come to birth and ageing not again.<sup>79</sup>

If he can make of the Self=*dhamma*=*buddha* a lamp, he is on the Way, not to Yama, the adjudicator of deeds done,<sup>81</sup> but to having finished, both in its sense of completion and of perfection, to having done what was to be done, *kata karanīya*.

<sup>71</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 85, n. 298.

<sup>72</sup> *D.* ii. 100.

<sup>74</sup> *Vbh.* 252, quoted *Asl.* 167.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *caraiya* of *AB.* VII. 15, and see A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Pilgrim's Way*, *op. cit.*, p. 10 ff.

<sup>77</sup> *D.* ii. 154.

<sup>80</sup> *D.* ii. 120.

<sup>78</sup> *S.* iii. 109.

<sup>73</sup> *BU.* IV. 3. 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Nidd.* II. 237.

<sup>79</sup> *Dhp.* 235-8.

<sup>81</sup> *A.* i. 138, *M.* iii. 178 ff.

## DUROHANA AND THE "WAKING DREAM"

BY MIRCEA ELIADE

**J**ULIEN GREEN, the French author, wrote in his diary on April 7th, 1933: "in all my books, the concept of fear or any other somewhat powerful emotion seemed inexplicably associated with the idea of a staircase. I realized this yesterday while making a mental review of my novels"—(then comes a list of references to all his works)—"I wonder how it was possible for this impression to recur so many times without my becoming aware of it. As a child, I used to dream that I was being pursued on a staircase. My mother experienced the same fears in her youth, and perhaps I have inherited something of it. I am convinced that many authors are prompted to write by an accumulation of *immemorable souvenirs*. They become the spokesmen of hundreds of the dead, *their* dead, and finally give tangible expression to what their ancestors kept strictly to themselves either from caution or from shame." (Julien Green, *Journal I*, 1938, p. 137.)

Let us leave the question of "*immemorable souvenirs*" aside for the time being, and concentrate on the two following facts: as Green himself points out, the *staircase* is a kind of *leitmotiv* in all his works and it is always coupled with a *powerful emotion*. As was to be expected, Freud saw in the staircase symbol the urge to sexual union. The least that can be said of this explanation is that it is one-sided and incomplete; certain psychoanalysts have recently tried to bring it into line with the facts (cf. e.g. R. Desoille—*Le rêve éveillé en psychothérapie*, Paris, 1945, pages 294 *et seq.*) There can be no doubt that the staircase in dreams or neuropathic hallucination is sometimes a sign of unsatisfied sexual desires, moreover, we are aware of the tendency of disintegrated psychisms to recover their equilibrium through a new sexual balance; but—when this recovery is effected in pathological cases on the psycho-sexual level—such reintegration is not necessarily psychological in either origin or structure. The psyche of the patient being, through the very fact of his disease, in a deteriorated state, and subject to the pressure of latent psycho-mental conditions, tries to recover its unity and structure by any act of reintegration, and *a fortiori* through coitus—the most *real* and *vital act* of all. But, the fact that the satisfaction of a repressed sexual desire helps to restore psychical reintegration, and finally contributes to the recovery of the patient, by no means proves that the *images* through which this repression makes itself apparent should be of sexual origin or have a sexual act as their exclusive object. An archetypal image can be "animated" and therefore function on any level—psychical, mental or spiritual.

Confining ourselves to the psychical aspect we find, for example, that R. Desoille succeeded in curing certain neuropaths by means of a technique which he calls the "Waking Dream." Now, the "Waking Dream" which he most frequently suggests to patients is precisely the *climbing dream*. By asking the patient to imagine himself going up a staircase or climbing a mountain, Desoille has obtained complete recovery, even in serious cases where previous psycho-analytical treatment had not brought the slightest improvement. This proves that through the *repetition* of an archetypal gesture the psyche recovers its integrity and regains its lost structural unity. If the psychagogy

of the controlled climbing dream gives such good results, this is because it is simply a spiritual technique applied to psychical fact.

Indeed, Desoille does not content himself with asking his patients to climb a staircase or a mountain, he also asks them to "fly" (e.g., *op. cit.* pp. 29 *et seq.*, pp. 36 *et seq.*, pp. 146 *et seq.*, etc., *et passim*). Professor G. Bachelard was quite right when he classified the technique of the ascensional "waking dream" as a form of the "imagination of movement," (cf. *L'air et les songes*, Paris, 1943, pp. 129 *et seq.*) "The elevation of the soul coincides with its serenity. In elevation and light a dynamic unity forms itself" (*op. cit.*, p. 139). But we do not consider that this constitutes an original and spontaneous movement of the "imagination"; the latter merely *imitates* the "gesture" of the soul which "elevates itself" in mystical and metaphysical meditation towards God—towards ultimate truth. The symbolism of climbing and "flight" is more coherent and rational than R. Desoille and G. Bachelard saw it.<sup>1</sup> If imagination rediscovers this symbolism, if poets and neuropaths can easily imagine themselves flying through the air or climbing mountains and stairs, this proves that imagination itself is far from being chaotic and anarchical and, on the contrary, that it follows the same patterns, transparent and coherent in "conscious" spiritual life.

It is not intended to pursue any further, in this paper, an analysis of what may be called the "logic of symbols" in order to demonstrate that even in so-called unconscious life, the symbol always proves itself coherent, i.e., "logical," and that it always supports a "system" easily expressed in rational terms. We have simply tried to demonstrate the "spontaneous repetition" in the secular world of certain archetypes found in ancient ritual and myth. We will leave the symbolism of "flight" which would take us beyond the scope of the subject, and deal with the significance of *climbing* a staircase. Julien Green noted that "fear or any other somewhat powerful emotion" seemed to be associated, in his literary work, with the idea of a staircase. With Desoille's patients, on the contrary, climbing is euphoric and always results in an increased psychical equilibrium. Such ambivalence is in the natural order of things. For climbing or ascent, in all traditions, symbolizes *the path to absolute reality*, and in the secular consciousness, the approach to this reality provokes ambivalent emotions of joy and fear, attraction and resistance, etc.<sup>2</sup> The idea of sanctification, death, love and liberation is implied in the symbolism of the Staircase. Indeed, all these modalities of being represents the abolition of the secular condition, i.e., the break through to a new ontological level; through love, death, holiness, liberation, etc., man moves from "illusion to reality."

It is useful to retrace in ancient religions the same symbols of ascension to Heaven by means of stairs. A few examples will suffice.<sup>3</sup> The Altai shaman makes his ascent by climbing slowly up the notches (*taptu*) of the sacrificial tree. He enters successively into the nine heavens and describes what he sees to his audience. In the sixth heaven, he worships the moon and in the seventh, the sun. Finally, in the Ninth Heaven, he prostrates himself before Bai Ülgen, the supreme God and offers him the soul of the immolated horse. At this stage, the culminating point of the shaman's ascent is reached. He is told by Bai Ülgen whether the sacrifice has been approved and he then receives forecasts concerning the weather. The exhausted shaman then collapses and, after a short silence,

<sup>1</sup> See *Le problème du chamanisme* by the Author, which will appear in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*.

<sup>2</sup> We have studied the morphology of Man's ambivalent attitude to what is sacred in our *Introduction à l'Histoire des Religions*, which will be published shortly.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the materials in *Le problème du chamanisme*.



arouses as if waking from a deep sleep.<sup>4</sup> The same ascent of the sacrificial birch-tree occurs when the shaman is initiated.<sup>5</sup>

The notches or steps cut into the birch-tree symbolize the planetary spheres. During the rites, the shaman invokes the assistance of the different deities whose respective colours identify them as planetary gods.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in Mithraic initiation rites and on the different coloured walls of the city of Ecbatane which symbolize the planetary heavens (*Herodotus*, I, 98) the moon is found in the sixth heaven and the sun in the seventh. Seven, the more ancient number of steps, has been increased to nine, for among the Ural-Altai peoples the "pillar of the world" has seven notches (*Holmberg, Der Baum des Lebens*, 25 *et seq.*) and the mythical tree with its seven branches symbolizes the celestial worlds (*ib.*, 137 and fig. 46). The ascent of the sacrificial Birch-tree corresponds to the ascent of the mythical tree found in the centre of the world. The hole at the top of the tent corresponds with the opening which is opposite the Pole Star and through which it is possible to move from one cosmic level to another. (*Ibid.* 30 *et seq.*) The rite therefore takes place in a "centre."

The Brahmanical rites also imply a ritual ascent to the abode of the gods. Indeed "the sacrifice has but one sure foundation, but one abode; the world of heaven" (*Śatapatha Brahmana*, VIII, 7, 4, 6). "The sacrifice is a trustworthy ferry" (*yayño vai sutarmā nauḥ*; *Aitareya Br.* III, 2, 29). "The sacrifice as a whole is the vessel which leads to Heaven" (*sarva eva yayño nauḥ svargyā*; *Śatapatha Br.* IV, 2, 5, 10). The rite is a *dūrohaṇa*—a "difficult mounting." The sacrificer climbs by means of steps (*ākramaṇa*) the sacrificial post and on reaching the summit, stretches out his arms (like the wings of a bird) and cries "we have come to Heaven, to the Devas; we have become immortal" (*Taittinīya-Samhitā*, I, 7, 9).<sup>7</sup> "Verily the Sacrificer makes it a ladder and a bridge (*ākramaṇam eva tat setum*) to attain the world of heaven" (*Taitt.-Samhitā* VI, 6, 4, 2). It is remarkable that this ascent should be expressed in practically identical terms in Indonesian and Siberian shamanic symbolism.<sup>8</sup> The Sacrificer "having become a bird, soars to the world of heaven" (*Pañcaviṃśa Brahmana*, V, 3, 5; Coomaraswamy, p. 47). Numerous texts mention the wings which one must possess in order to reach the summit of the Tree (*Jyaiminīya Upaniṣad Brahmana*, III, 13, 9), "the Gander whose seat is in the Light" (*Kauṣītaki Up.* V, 2), and the sacrificial horse which, in the appearance of a bird, carries the sacrificer to heaven (*Mahādhara ad Śatapatha Br.* XIII, 2, 6, 15), etc.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, a similar climbing symbolism is found in funeral rites and beliefs. The soul of the dead man climbs a mountain pass or up a tree or rope. (For this latter example cf. Van Gennep, *Mythes et Légendes d'Australie*, Paris, 1906, Nos. 17 and 66 and notes). The usual expression in Assyrian for the word "to die" is "to cleave to the mountain." Similarly in Egyptian, *myny*—"to cleave"—is a euphemism for "to die" (H. Zimmern, *Zum babylonischen Neujahrfest* II, p. 5, n. 2.) The sun sets between the

<sup>4</sup> W. Radloff, *Aus Sibirien* (Leipzig, 1884) II, pp. 19-51. Cf. Uno Harva, *Die religiösen Vortreibungen der altaischen Völkern* (Helsinki, 1938), pp. 553 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Harva, *op. cit.*, pp. 488 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> Uno Holmberg (Harva) *Der Baum des Lebens* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, XVI, Helsinki, 1922), p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Svayamātṛyṇā: Janua Coeli* ("Zalmoxis," II, 1939, published 1941, pp. 1-51), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> See *Le problème du chamanisme*, by the Author.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the other texts collected by Coomaraswamy, *Svayamātṛyṇā*, pp. 8, 46, 47, etc., also Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brahmanās* (Paris, 1898), p. 93. The same path is, of course, followed after death; S. Lévi, pp. 94 *et seq.*; H. Güntert, *Der arische Welthönig und Heiland* (Halle, 1923), pp. 70 *et seq.*

mountain tops and that is where the road runs which the dead man must take on his journey to the other world. Yama, the first dead man, has gone "through the upper passes" in order to "show the way to many men." (R.V. X, 14, 1). According to Ural-Altaic popular belief the path of the dead climbs over the mountains; as an initiation ordeal, Bolot, the Kara-Khirghiz hero, and Kesar, the legendary king of the Mongols, each penetrate into the Beyond through a cavern at the top of a mountain; the shaman makes his journey into Hades by climbing several high mountains (cf. the materials quoted in my *Problème du chamanisme*). The Egyptians have kept in their funeral texts the term *asken pet* (a sort of ramp or staircase) in order to show that the ladder placed at Rd's disposal for his ascent from earth to heaven is a real ladder (cf. W. Budge, *From fetish to god in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 1934, p. 346). "For me is the ladder installed that I may see the gods" says the *Book of the Dead*. "The gods make him a ladder so that by this means he may climb to heaven" (R. Weill, *Le Champ des roseaux et le champ des offrandes dans la religion funéraire et la religion générale*, Paris, 1936, p. 52 and 28). In many tombs, amulets representing a ladder (*maget*) or staircase have been found (Budge, *The Mummy*, ed. II, Cambridge, 1935, pp. 324 and 326).

Death—with initiation and sacrifice—not only realize a break through to a new ontological level but also a spiritual reintegration. That such reintegration—obtained by means of an "ascent"—should be genuine, is proved by the fact that the climbing dream facilitates the psychical reintegration of neuropaths. But this correspondence between ritual and ecstatic (shamanic) ascents on the one hand, and dreams or climbing hallucinations on the other, does not justify the inference that climbing symbolism is itself of psychological "origin." Far from *deriving* from certain ecstatic experiences, the symbol, on the contrary, *confers* a coherent structure and theoretical significance on every ecstatic experience. Unfortunately, in the limited space at our disposal, we cannot proceed any further with the discussion of this important problem. But more careful examination will reveal, firstly, that climbing rites, myths and symbols can be classified under a much wider heading which may be called the actual relations between religious man (the mythical ancestor, wizard, king, "dead man") and heaven; secondly that each one of these rites, myths or symbols presupposes a *general* cosmologico-theological *system* of which each one is merely a more or less clear but never complete illustration. It would therefore not be prudent to attempt to explain any *single* one of these rites, myths or symbols without taking into consideration the *whole* of which they are all component parts. In my *Problème du chamanisme* I have dealt with shamanic climbing ritual in conjunction with a certain number of similar rituals, myths and symbols. All this material has been grouped under several headings: (1) Magic flight in the shape of a bird, ascensional dreams, rituals and myths in Australia, Indonesia, Buddhist and Hindu India, Central Asia, Siberia and the Arctic Regions; (2) Myths concerning the mythical ancestor's ascent to heaven (or descent to earth) by means of a tree or mountain which is placed in the centre of the world, or by means of a liana or a "chain of arrows" etc. (Australia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, North and South America); (3) Funeral rites, concerning ascent to heaven by means of ladders or stairs, reserved to the elect (Australia, Indonesia, Ancient Egypt) or else accessible to the majority of the community (Nepal, Africa, Russia, Tcheremises); (4) Climbing rites portraying a symbolic ascent to heaven (Brahmanical and Altaic sacrifices). Subsequently, we have noticed that most of these documents imply a cosmological symbolism of the "centre," that is to say they can be encompassed in a *theory* which is by no means of empirical origin.

## DUROHANA AND THE "WAKING DREAM"

All these rites, myths and symbols connected with climbing and flight, etc., only became possible because they were preceded by a theologico-metaphysical conception—because in the end, they were finally based on *ontology*.

Thus, the Indian ritual and the shamanic ascent are *dūrohaṇa*, "a difficult path," because they realize a break through to a new ontological level (like any act which takes place in a "centre"). Julien Green's staircase makes him experience anew the fear of an existential leap from the unreality of the secular world to reality. Moreover, Desoille's patients have rediscovered, by suggestion or spontaneously, psychical reintegration through climbing symbols. Through their "waking dreams" of climbing or flight, they recover psychical cohesion and equilibrium.<sup>10</sup> But these waking dreams are only a simian imitation by the unconscious of an archetypal gesture of the super-conscious. "Simian imitation" is not used in a pejorative sense. Indeed, even "life" and "matter" themselves, continually imitate the gestures by which the spirit, in its carnal state, attempts to liberate itself; such *imitation* has perhaps sometimes been confused with *prefiguration*.

Paris, January, 1947.

<sup>10</sup> Just as some of Dr. Jung's patients have improved their psychical balance through rediscovering the *mandala*. For a psyche in a deteriorated state, the discovery of the *mandala* corresponds to a "concentration" and to a primary reintegration. A survey of this problem is found in *Techniques du Yoga* (now in the press at Editions Gallimard) by the Author.

## THE VALIDITY OF THE ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLE

BY KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI (ENGLAND)

IT is an honour being asked to contribute, no matter how inadequately, to a volume of "homages" to Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, one of the most brilliant profound and subtle of contemporary thinkers, whether it be in the field with which he is peculiarly associated, Art, or in religion, philosophy and the discussion of social structure-forms, and as men of all nationalities and ways of thinking are among the contributors to this volume, a Spanish-Sicilian Parsi may not be considered amiss on this ground even if he should, as he probably will be, on others, particularly as he is of those who utterly reject, that loose imprecise and largely meaningless word "Indian," as being in any manner of way applicable to him or them.

If I read and understand the very distinguished *raison-d'être* of this volume aright, there is to my mind, one way at least in which he is a portent of enormous importance, not only by reason of his intrinsic qualities as critic, thinker and exegetist in all matters appertaining to or germane to the arts, but as an indication of a trend of development among intellectuals of the highest rank, namely a decisive and emphatic reaction against and repudiation of the totalitarian-termite conception of organized human society, a conception that so far from indicating an advance, as its indoctrinated infatuates pretend is, in point of fact, a retrogression to a state far below that of the animals in the scale of life, the evolution and development of what is a continual rising and expansion of consciousness, individuality and mental independence, from the mindless quasi-automatic instinctive processes and reactions of insects to the consciously volitional independence of activity of the adult and fully mentally developed human being.

There are, of course, those whose faculty of critical appraisal and scrutiny has become so atrophied and numbed by the drugging hypnotic effect of contemporary propaganda that they call men like Dr. Coomaraswamy "reactionaries."

This word is one of those many question-begging issue-confusing epithets of a time that considers it has "explained away" anything it does not like by giving it a label to which there attaches some sort of implied opprobrium, and this word has, precisely because of its complete lack of any precise significance, the ability to take on just the denigatory or derogatory tinge that may be desired. The implication is, of course, of opposition to what is equally loosely and imprecisely called "progress," "advance" and such like fads. It will not escape the notice of any critical observer that these words too are just as loose, windy and imprecise. Progress? Towards what, from what? It is progress when a fruit from being merely bad, becomes a deliquescent mess—progress in the process of decomposition. The same thing is true of "advance," though the fact that the word is often associated with an advanced stage of decay may in some small way act as a check upon the fantasies of modern sentimental "Progressivist" cant.

The interesting and instructive position is thus arrived at that it is the progressivist-perfectionist illusion-monger (of the Wells type especially) who is the "reactionary," using the word in the sense of one who looks backwards to a supposed worse state of affairs than at present, and those who, like Dr. Coomaraswamy stand for an aristocratic

culture-polity the real progressives, using that word in the precisely limited sense of those who look forward (or rather back) to a better, more wholesome form of society than that presented to us by the hideous chaotic spectacle of the contemporary world. Dr. Coomaraswamy looks, if I understand him properly, to a restored caste system as the way to that harmonious ordered civilization; as Norman Douglas so wisely remarks in that small but immensely important and witty book *How About Europe* of the institution of caste and Manu's Tables, "These things are not inventions; they are deductions. The principle of caste is founded on the fact that all men are not equal. One may suspect that Manu was further aware of the biological truth that particular talents are prone to run in families, and that therefore he elaborated his system inductively: if in families, why not in allied family groups forming themselves by persistive selection and inter-marriage into corporations or guilds of musicians, doctors, servants and so forth?" Human beings *do* tend to fall into the four broad divisions of the primordial caste categories. To chatter of the abuses with which human beings, being what they are, have cluttered up caste as they do everything else on earth that they touch, is nothing to the point against caste as such but against human beings. This incurable tendency to blame those faults, vices and defects inherent in their human-all-too-human humanity upon anything outside themselves, rather than upon themselves, has an admirable symbolic illustration in the Genesis story of Adam and the Forbidden Fruit. Adam, true to type, accuses the woman of tempting him to eat, burking the cardinal fact that he *did* eat, which is the whole point at issue, and even he has hardly the nerve to try and pretend that he was *forced* to eat against his will. Catholic Christianity in its vast wisdom, its magnificent sanity, has never evaded this question, the clear-sighted, realistic acceptance of the facts of the matter regarding the innate odiousness of human beings as a whole being enshrined in the doctrine of Original Sin: in one form or another all the great religions point to this central—and one would have imagined self-evident fact about human beings. To those sentimentalists who object to what they call this pessimistic degraded view of men and their manners, it should always be replied that it was not your professional man-haters, your Schopenhauers, your la Rochefoucaulds, your Vauvenargues, who first reached these devastating conclusions about human beings, but the Saints, the Prophets, the Mystics. Nothing can shaken or explain away that one conclusive fact. The Saints and the Seers face the fact with clear-eyed courageous realism: they said, in effect, it's a terrible pity that human beings *are* like that, we wish they weren't; we are everlastingly telling them how much happier they would be if they weren't, but there it is; they *are* like that, most of them, and no purpose, no good purpose is served by pretending that they are *not* . . . and, *not* to be like that is to be a Saint! If you pretend that a fire will never break out in your premises, though you have stacks of inflammable matter stored therein, and allow your fatuous delusion and complacency to stop your taking precautions against possible outbreaks, you will cut a sorry and distressful figure if and when one does.

Dr. Coomaraswamy sees in the ancient aristocratic-hierarchical ordering of organized human society, the best that has ever been achieved towards the attaining of a freely functioning harmonious social structure, free from those stresses and strains resulting from that modern mercantilistic monomania that leads certainly, ineluctably and inevitably to the Servile state, as Hilaire Belloc foresaw with unerring political foresight and sagacity forty or more years ago, when that enormously important book, *The Servile State*, was first published. Every step, every development there set out has come

to pass with unfailing precision in exactly the sequence that Belloc describes.<sup>1</sup> Here it seems to the point to remark that nothing is more lamentable nor more deeply depressing than to see those "politically" minded persons in what is called "India" within which area there first arose the archetype of all later representative legislative institutions, the Panchayat, and the magnificently rational fourfold caste classification of human society—befogged in the miasmas rising from the decayed and rotting remnants of a European "liberalism" that had as little as possible of anything truly liberal about it, and that all the great Papal Encyclicals of the last fifty years or more have so penetratingly exposed, showing all who will take the trouble to read, the most precise and accurate warning against the ghastly developments that have followed.

From among the *ignave pecus* of these inept persons, chafferers in the echoes of discredited and exploded European fashions of political haberdashery, Coomaraswamy stands out with Titanic stature, linking up as he does with a splendid past, going straight back to the fountain-head and sources of the political forms and traditions, indigenous to the land to which he belongs. These traditions are incontestably hierarchical and aristocratic, as they have been at every time and in every place that has seen any great culture-structure worthy of the name. Now of the many grotesque and imbecile myths of which our time is so shockingly prolific, none surpasses in absurdity that of the "classless society."

As the great Italian Pareto shows, this is the typical bait wherewith the rabble is induced to "liberate" itself from one halter to submit to another, and a worse. The phrase is seen to be completely meaningless upon a moment's reflection. Where there are any Government offices, and it is difficult to see how there cannot be, with Government officials sitting in them, whether it be a Food Ministry, a Post Office there, a police force, *ipso facto*, is a Ruling Class. The tradition for which, as I see it, Dr. Coomaraswamy stands is that of the hereditary aristocracy or hereditary Ruling Caste. All the available experience and evidence of an independent and unideologically warped or distorted kind, drives home the fact that life in a society with an hereditary aristocratic social structure is easier, freer, more pleasant and comfortable than any other.

The importance of having an aristocratic Ruling Class, so sure of its position, so wealthy as to make attempts at bribery if not impossible, at least as difficult as possible, is constantly stressed by that great sociological thinker Anthony Ludovici; and the sheer common sense of the contention is one would think, obvious. No one, one imagines, will dispute the desirability of having a Governing Class as immune from corruption as humanly possible, it is then going to be far more difficult to bribe a member of a Government if he be immensely wealthy, accustomed to the tradition of handling great wealth and living in surroundings redolent thereof, than if he knows that with loss of office, loss of income, or a very large part, goes with it. It needs to be understood here that bribery can be both overt and covert, implicit and explicit; it may not take so crude a form as a blunt offer of a large sum of money, rather will it in these days take the form of an offer of a directorship upon the board of one or more financial or city houses carrying salaries of thousands a year, in return for which, it is the most natural thing in the world to assume that at least an *absence* of any political activity prejudicial to the interests of the concerns in question will be the expected *quid pro quo*.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hayek in his recent *The Road to Serfdom* deals at length with the same trend, but without the clarity, precision and wide historical grasp of Belloc. It is symptomatic of this shallow-pated age that none of the reviewers so much as mentioned the outstanding primacy of Belloc in this field.



## THE VALIDITY OF THE ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLE

Again, a wealthy hereditary governing class is likely to be far more easy going and tolerant with regard to dissident political opinion. The aristocratic régime of Imperial Russia is generally held up as the crowning exemplar of a cruel, ruthless and arrogant ruling class ; but a startling proof of its leniency is to hand in its treatment of political and revolutionary offenders as compared with the new Red Tzarist régime of Stalin. After the Russo-Japanese War there was a revolutionary outbreak against the Imperial régime ; this was suppressed, and some fifteen thousand persons were executed for their part in it. The Russian Prime Minister of the time, Stolypin,<sup>2</sup> was held up to the eyes of the world as a monster of ruthless cruelty ; yet what he did fades into nothingness besides the numbers of the victims of Stalin's purges, and his five million *kulak* victims. Lenin during the Imperial régime was a political prisoner for activities of the most emphatically and unquestionably treasonable and subversive nature and was sent to political exile, in Siberia. There he was not only allowed a small house to himself, with domestic animals to supply his wants in the way of food, but he had free access to all the books, papers, and so on that he wanted. What leniency remotely comparable to this is to be found in any of the so-called " liberating " régimes that have resulted from the overthrow of the old Imperial " tyrannies " in Europe ? In Imperial Austria-Hungary a native of what was then Bohemia, was free to advocate republicanism, that is to say the overthrow of the Imperial Habsburg dynasty. When Bohemia was " liberated," becoming Czecho-Slovakia, it became a crime punishable either with lifelong imprisonment or death to advocate any other system of government than the republican then in force ! The widest, most outspoken criticism was tolerated in many of the older Imperial régimes. In those that followed them the mere suspicion of harbouring views unfavourable to those in power is highly dangerous, and can often be a capital offence if any hint of it is allowed to leak out. To underline all this it needs constantly to be remembered that the three men generally considered to be among the world's worst tyrants, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were all of them of indisputably non-aristocratic, of most authentically " working-class " origin. The moral of that should not be overlooked.

And compare the last International Treaty drawn up by representatives of European Powers who were all of them hereditary aristocrats, men of great wealth and unassailable position, namely the Treaty of Vienna, with the Treaty of Versailles or Trianon, the work of the so-called " democratic " politicians, or at least of the forces using them as tools in the way the older aristocratic representatives could never be used.

Although Napoleon's Imperial France had as ruthlessly overrun Europe as William II's Germany, how did the aristocratic statesmen of Europe deal with her, trained as they were in a long tradition of international courtesy and diplomacy, uninfluenced either by the mob or, what is the same thing, million circulation newspaper clamour ? France was simply put back within her frontiers, not an inch of her own territory was taken from her, and no rankling sense of injustice nor thirst for revenge was left behind. Europe, as a consequence enjoyed the best part of a century of peace, complete freedom from any major War, apart from the Franco-German War of 1870-2. The catastrophic lunacy of Versailles led inevitably to 1939 ; it was the work of democratically elected national repre-

<sup>2</sup> Stolypin's far-reaching agrarian reforms aimed at the establishment of an independent self-supporting peasantry and mark him out as one of the great statesmen of modern times, and if completed would have transformed Russia. His success was immense, even having regard to the short time he had in which to do his work before he was assassinated, by a tool of those who saw their road to power and the Kremlin in danger of being effectually blocked by a sturdy independent population of peasant-proprietors, those whose handiest and most malleable tool is a doped and dopeable urbanised propertyless crowd of proletarianised wage-slaves.

sentatives not one hereditary aristocrat among them, all of them owing their position to popular, that is to say, mob favour, and all of them destined to lose it, at the hands of the self-same forces.

The calamitous decline in International Good Manners is all part and parcel of the same thing, the decline and disappearance of the aristocratic principles of an hereditary ruling caste. Metternich, Fleury, or Talleyrand would have been horrified and disgusted at the idea of locking a man up and robbing him of all his property for no other reason than that his and your Governments happen to be at variance; this of course is a commonplace to-day. The very vanity of human beings—one of their minor vices—is adroitly turned to good account in the aristocratic principle and idea; for, in order to emphasise and stress that fact that he is *not* of the mob the aristocrat begins by adopting tone and code of behaviour and manner—*noblesse oblige*—intended to mark his superiority to them. And even if this tone is insincere and not second nature, not the result of a long inculcated and inherited tradition and code of behaviour, it is no bad thing, hypocrisy, as some one has very well said, being the homage of vice to virtue. The overthrow of the older aristocratic Ruling Classes of Europe and the usurpation of their place by the brigands of Big Business and High Finance has quickly brought in its train all the disasters of “confusion of Caste” so accurately and precisely foreseen by the Ancient Lawgiver of Āryavarta.

The voice of one just man crying in the wilderness of modern democracy and mob-man rule, with its hideous and unspeakable logical end, Red Fascist Totalitarianism, when it is the voice of a Coomaraswamy, may well serve to announce the retracing of steps up and out of the democratic-totalitarian midden, and to be the harbinger of the restoration of the humane civilized—and therefore aristocratic—values, the Immemorial Decencies, as Aldous Huxley so finely names them. In other quarters, too, there are signs of a realization for the need of a retracing of steps—a “reaction” that is a true progress, using the word in the sense of an ameliorative, a bettering process. Intelligent and thinking minds are more and more perceiving that a scientific rationalistic materialism that culminates in Hiroshima and Yokohama, or in those horrifying train-loads of political prisoners in the Scientific Materialist State *par excellence*, that Negley Farson told us about not long since in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, is neither scientific nor rational; is worthless compared with that which produces a Chartres, a Capella Palatina, a Jami, a St. John of the Cross or a Coomaraswamy.

## ATOM AND ANU

BY KURT F. LEIDECKER (U.S.A.)

THE cynic, that is, the doglike man, must be tempted to laugh about "atomic fission." On the one hand, linguistically it must remind him of unscrewing the inscrutable, and, on the other, realistically, spell in connection with Hiroshima and Nagasaki the brash inconsistencies of this day and age which reckons the effectiveness of a bomb by the hypothetical number of lives saved, not the actual number of lives lost.

Also in other respects the cynic might have cause for vaunting his attitude. He asks, does not the A-bomb sound the death knell of philosophy which has safely prated and speculated for 25 centuries about atoms and *anus* because no one had seen them until Rutherford made his famous experiment? Philosophy long since has been defrauded of the soul by psychology, the vital force by biology, the beautiful by utilitarianism, and the Dionysiac by theology. Has physics at last claimed and demonstrated what pseudo-physicists in the garb of philosophers have always vaguely hinted?

Reviewing hastily the history of atomic speculation, it appears that a variety of shades of intent and meaning have been connected with what we are pleased to call in deference to Hellenic culture "the indivisible," that is, the atom. Aristotle who himself does not subscribe to atomism properly speaking, summarises tersely the doctrine: "Leucippos and Democritus maintain that all things are composed of indivisible bodies; that these are infinite in number and shape, but that all things differ because of the bodies or atoms of which they consist and their position and arrangement." Minuteness, inviolability and partlessness are adduced as reasons for the atomic nature of these bodies. Universal motion and the void are corollaries in this atomic world view.

While thus the classical Greek atomists placed the emphasis chiefly on non-divisibility, the Hindus were primarily concerned with the minuteness of the *anu* which they underscored by coining the concept *pramāṇu*, the excessively or infinitely small. The concept was extended even to time and thus clung less to mass or corpuscularity and spacial extension and more to quantity than in the Greek conception. By so doing, they saved at least a little face with physicists. Indeed, the modern worshippers of the experimental method must be out of patience with a Leucippos and Democritus who pictured their smallest particles smooth or rough, round or angular, curved, hook-shaped and the like, or the followers of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika who assume a multiplicity of atoms, varying in their qualities with the elements. However conceived atom or *anu* are physical concepts, referring to "real," material, hard and solid "facts" which in their aggregate and peculiar combinations emerge from their sub-visibility into experience and hence make up the data of sensation.

Philosophers, both East and West, have invited the doom of their system by offering description, hypothetical and otherwise of the world of sense and sense data. For, science as an effective method for dealing with perceptible and experiential reality was bound to modify and eventually ridicule any description, however derived, of such reality. The first atomic bomb dropped in the desert of Arizona really signified the last warning to

thinkers interested in saving the prestige of philosophy to meddle in things which are not of the essence of philosophy or a *darśana*, strictly speaking.

Of course, there exists merely a linguistic bond between what modern physicists call an atom and Greeks and Hindus understood by it. The modern concept is a conglomeration of historical and semantic, logical and methodological, linguistic, hypothetical and experiential and experimental elements. It must be obvious that modern science and engineering do not furnish any proof or disproof of a thing that Hindus called *anu* and the Greeks atom. To-day, scientists are working with a Janus-headed point, now mass, now energy, which, due to the poverty of linguistic expression is still called atom, just as we speak of the sun as setting. What the semantic content of that word is, is absolutely immaterial to them. Hence they do not encounter any meaning difficulty in such an antinomial coinage as atomic fission. A-tests cannot be said to either bear out or disprove ancient speculation. Both were conceived within totally different meaning complexes and action wholes. In other words, no equity exists between what a Kanāda, a Democritus or an H. D. Smyth are speaking about.

In all this discussion it is not our intention, however, to deny a remarkable speculative ability in the atomists who were able to predicate and perhaps predict certain essential qualities in subvisibility matter which instruments (the extension of our sensory organs and their abilities) have latterly revealed. The "a-tom," in having at last become divisible, has borne out Epicurus who long ago speculatively maintained it was. To an extent the philosophers who have emphasised its *anuka* quality, have also been vindicated. Those philosophers who, like Leucippos, Democritus and the Jains, predicated motion in the atom, seem to have been supported best in their speculations.

It must be remembered that atom speculation, in India perhaps more demonstrably so than in Greece, grew out of a certain dissatisfaction with idealistic tendencies that seemingly neglected the world of the senses. In actuality, atom speculation is science rather than philosophy, and its shortcomings are not those of philosophy but those of science in its initial, non-experimental stages. Logic and inference, so important in theoretical science, we find in India in particular to be the matrix of atom speculation. But philosophy is more than the canons of logic and syllogism. It embraces consistency and intelligibility, in addition to logic, while its chief methodological principles are intelligence, understanding and insight. Science is led where certain empirical data lead its devotees. Consistency is never its primary aim, but explanation with a view to predicability so that useful contrivances may be made available and a practical course of action be pursued on its basis. In no other field are hypotheses and theories offered with such frequency and discarded so shabbily as in science, which thus reveals its pragmatic and instrumental character. Philosophy, in its true sense, has ideal intentions: Not what is, but what should be, not what is apparent but what is ultimately so and absolutely. What would moral life be if it were controlled by ethical theories that are as seasonable and subject to fundamental revision as the theories of science, what our beliefs in the intrinsic structure of the universe which is to uphold ideals, if they were governed by theories that are subject to change as frequently as the theories of science?

The Indian atomism has perhaps justly been interpreted as a reaction against the *sūnyavāda* of the Buddhist school and the *vijñāvāda* of earlier Brahminical tendencies. Nevertheless it has played a subordinate rôle among Indian *darśanas*. It certainly does not enjoy so great popularity as others in which the emphasis is placed on epistemology, *vidya* and *jñāna*. Neither the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, nor the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas,

nor the Jains as the main representatives of atomism have attained the renown of Vedānta, while in Greece the main line of philosophic tradition is traceable through Anaximander, the Eleatic School and Plato rather than the physicist philosophers.

Philosophy has long since dropped in self-defence the term soul in preference to self, I and ego, and the term God for the less church-freighted metaphysical world-ground or the like. It is sure to drop atom also along with ether and *ākāśa*. Before these concepts have been cleansed, as it were, of their material content they confuse the issues of philosophy with those of science. To what extent India has developed the *anu* concept in the direction of, let us say, a Leibnizian monad or a Herbartian real, still awaits clarification which a purely linguistic research will never furnish satisfactorily. But that there are indications in this direction is amply proven by the identification of *manas* as an *anu*; the coincidence of the smallest with the greatest as *ātman* with *brahman*; the concepts of *anur ātmā* and *mahātmā* to be found in the Upaniṣads; the alleged *amūrta* or formless nature of the *anu*, and similar concepts met even in the literature of the atomists themselves.

It might be found that, barring the frequent temptations to substitute in the use of the word *anu* description for symbolising the relations necessary in explaining quantitative and qualitative characteristics of reality, methodological expedients have been mixed with other elements producing unfortunate semantic complications which make comparisons of the Hindu concepts with those of Greece almost futile. Beyond that, we have to make clear distinctions between the corpuscular, space-time nature of atoms as conceived by the physicists and pseudo-philosophers and the mathematical nature of logical, if not purely heuristic entities of philosophers and those thinkers who because of their insight are called mystic by people lacking it. No one can clarify and pursue these distinctions better on a documentary basis than Dr. Coomaraswamy, and it is our hope that his contribution, which he has been good enough to hint to the writer, will soon be published.

## SYMBOLISM AND SOCIETY

By HOWARD C. HOLLIS (U.S.A.)

IT has long been known that a study of the products of any age can throw an enormous amount of light on the culture that produced them. The comparison, for example, of a group of standard ancient artifacts with an equally representative collection of modern objects reveals at once the fact that the former were handmade and the latter machine-made, i.e., were produced by fundamentally opposed societies. Moreover, a study of the architecture, sculpture and painting of the Middle Ages in Europe proves very rapidly that the period was strongly religious and that the people lived according to the laws of the church because they believed in a "spiritual authority" that ordered the Universe. A perusal of the output of the next few centuries gives evidence of the tremendous cultural struggle through which the people evolved until the arrival of the full Renaissance with its interest in novelty science, and especially commerce. It seems possible that the whole modern period will ultimately be referred to as the Commercial Age, for now the production of almost anything is to a greater or less degree contingent on commercial expediency. The Middle Ages were an epoch of spiritual utility; the modern age one of material utility. Among the finest products of the Middle Ages were paintings, statues, and religious architecture; among the finest products of modern times are surgical instruments, streamlined trains, and skyscrapers.

It is easy to reach these conclusions and many others like them, but the extraordinary thing is that we, who know so much about history that we look down on others who know less, have no use for it. If nothing else has been proven by all the men of science, at least it is now obvious to anyone that a certain effect comes from a certain cause. Yet, having more history at our disposal than any people has had before, we fail to use it. Why do we not see that if the same causes have produced the same effects in different places and at different times, the chances are that they will do it again and that the way to bring about the desired kind of society is to act in such a way as to cause certain effects?

Since a great deal of comparative research would be essential to the proper operation of such a project, this paper is simply to suggest possibilities and not finalities. Even without thorough investigation, however, it appears that the analogies can be drawn within rather broad limits. One of the most important points to observe is that the main antagonism is between the spiritual attitude and the material attitude or, in terms of artistic production, symbolism and decoration.

In China in the Shang and early Chou Periods bronze vessels and other objects were produced in accordance with hieratic laws and the results were vigorous, geometric, and symbolic. Everything had its own use and its own significance; nothing was hit-or-miss. In late Chou times the so-called "Huai style" was more playful, sinuous and decorative. Symbols were combined, confused, and generally had a tendency away from their original intent towards decoration for its own sake without regard for meaning. Latest research has shown that the most notable feature of Hua ornament, namely angels and volutes, was not indigenous but was brought in from the West.<sup>1</sup> Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Robert Heine-Geldern, *Prehistoric Research in the Netherlands Indies*, p. 147.



it is known that the era nearly reached its close under a ruthless dictator, Ch'in Shih Huang, who tried to wipe out the past and consolidated and solidified the empire by building roads and waterways and abolishing all but one language. Unfortunately foreign wars and government required more taxes than the people could pay, and the state fell into anarchy soon after his death.

A few centuries later, similar conditions manifested themselves in India. Before the conquest of the Kushans, Buddhist representation had been limited to symbols, with the addition of some of the nature spirits of local cults. The Kushans, however, registered not only great enthusiasm for Buddhism but also impatience with geometric and other symbols, so that the Buddha and Maitreya began to be represented anthropomorphically. Such statues were not "realistic," but nevertheless were far more material and personal than the abstract symbols used previously. Here, as in China, it turns out that the new approach was ushered in by foreigners. Not only is this the case, but also Kanishka, the great Kushan dictator, extended and consolidated the empire at the expense of his people. In fact, it is said that he was murdered to stop his foreign wars.<sup>2</sup>

Now, it is said, the situation is different; and it is this attitude which forces us to consider again our abuse of historical data. Certainly the situation to-day is more complex, but that entails only a difference in degree and not in kind. The world has been made one by rapid communications but is still violently divided by various national aims. That the period is basically similar to those touched on above can be observed in the change from the symbolic representation of the Middle Ages all over the world to the realism of the XIXth century, a change which was brought about by foreign influences in different countries and by the dependence of all peoples on a past which was foreign to them.<sup>3</sup> Even the so-called abstract paintings and sculptures of to-day are personal and not general, so that as a rule people can express no more than personal preferences, without regard for content. To continue the analogy, it is much too easy to point out that roads and waterways have been improved, that countries have been expanded and solidified, and that there has been a plethora of dictators who have taken their peoples into devastating foreign wars, thereby raising the taxes unbearably. In most cases there have been attempts to abolish at least a part of the native heritage and there have been murders and revolts.

It is not impossible that knowledge of what is to come would persuade to-day's leaders to alter their courses, and it is here humbly suggested that such knowledge is readily obtainable. The main problem is: are the causes now operating so powerful and inevitable as to bring about certain effects regardless of opposition, or—to say it in another way—does the fact that certain causes are now in operation preclude the possibility of the requisite change in attitude? Anyone not a hopeless fatalist must believe in the possibility of changing the pattern.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Even in a country like China with its long historical continuity the change from the spiritual to the material point of view has brought about a misunderstanding of the ancient past; that is to say, the ancient past of modern man is foreign to him.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAKEDNESS

BY PROF. JAMES MARSHALL PLUMER (U.S.A.)

"I looked upon my body  
And saw it up in arms  
Against my naked soul."<sup>1</sup>

ST. MECHTILD OF MAGDEBURG.

ONE could hardly find a better guide for consideration of the "nude" in art than the words quoted above, written by a German nun in the XIIIth century. All too easily can one slip into the error of discussing the subject from any one of various prejudiced points of view peculiar either to the East or to the West. It may be held equally, for example, that the East never attained to a concept of "pure anatomy," or, on the other hand, that it never descended to it. Such opposing judgments may understandably be made of Rubens' well-known painting, "The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus." So, too, with respect to the carven images of erotic goddesses on the Temple of the Sun at Konarak. Critics may concur with the pronouncements of such writers as Vincent Smith and Lowell Thomas that the latter are obscene; others may consider them, as simple pilgrims would, as nothing but sublime. Even so these prejudices, if so they may be called, are infinitely to be preferred to a prevalent type of Fine Arts criticism which would consider both the Rubens and the Konarak women from a single level of reference and see in them an abstract beauty apart from what they represent. This can be possible only by shutting eyes and mind to all but the sensuous appeal of superficial surfaces—in other words by reducing both to the lowest common denominator. With respect to the Daughters it is debatable which is worse: to praise them in accordance with Victorian standards as "idealized anatomy," or to deplore them from the point of view of the surrealists who prefer their flesh piecemeal. The only honest Western judgment of these nudes is that they are truly magnificent abstractions of the living female flesh as Rubens, a master of oil painting and a connoisseur of women, knew it. From the traditional Oriental point of view, however, one could only consider them as masterpieces of shadow without substance, or to use Chinese terminology, all *yin* and no *yang*.

Now we hold that this last way of thought is not specifically Oriental, being equally indeed that of St. Mechtild, already referred to. The good Christian nun would, assuredly, have recoiled from the loathly flesh of Rubens as the "body up in arms." And if so, is it too daring to suppose that she could have revelled in the glory of "the naked soul" at Konarak? Here indeed is portrayed the ecstasy of the brides of God. Scarcely a century after those images were carved on the great Temple of the Sun, this same nun addressed Deity thus:

"O Bee . . . O Dove . . . O Sun. . .,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reinhold, H. A., Editor, *The Soul Afire*, Pantheon, 1945, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

PLATE XLIX



*Photo by John and Irene Vincent of Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A.*

FIG. 1—*Yakshi* ON EAST TORANA, STUPA I SANCHI



*Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

FIG. 2—VENUS RISING FROM THE WAVES BY BOTTICELLI

and wrote :

" Ah ! Lord, if only once  
It happened on a day  
That to my heart's desire  
I look on you, and lay  
My arms around you lovingly  
The rapture of your holy love  
Would flood my soul with ecstasy . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Rubens the master painter and the anonymous master craftsman of Konarak, indeed, portrayed the same subject matter—seduction—though each with different connotation. The one portrayed the subject literally and as if historically recorded ; the other abstractly and as eternally conceived. The one painted a visual view of the flesh, the other carved a symbolic conception of the spirit. Note then how the former has avoided the essential point, the meeting of lovers, which the latter, confident of the goodness of God, has portrayed.

It is not our purpose to underrate the ability of Rubens as a painter, we would only criticize the use to which he put his ability. At least Rubens, in healthy contrast to the myriad painters of cold still " life studies " and " odalisques," made of the fleshly image a living, moving, vibrant thing. He and the others of his time, however, failed ever to equal in humorous horror the naked bodies done by the anonymous Christian painters of Mediaeval Europe, whether portrayed in Eden or in the Jaws of Death. To the mediaeval monks of Europe, or the Indian, Chinese and Japanese artists, the body for itself was ludicrous and was often so drawn. When Toba Sojo felt called upon to portray the flesh, he painted hares and frogs ! The nude of latter day Western art, all too frequently stands condemned by the seriousness with which the profane human body was cultivated. Fortunately for the honour of the West, there is William Blake who rendered the nude human body precisely as he spoke of it as " the naked human form divine." What *he* took seriously was the redemption of the body, a favourite thesis, Professor Goodenough tells us with the ancient Jewish mystic Philo who held that " . . . the soul can so dominate it that the body shows forth an imitation of the powers of the soul."<sup>4</sup>

When Aphrodite, coming upon a sculptured image of herself, according to legend, cried, " Alas, where did Praxitiles see me naked ! " what she deplored was the profane eye with which he had viewed her sacred form. Well might the Goddess have approved the image of herself rising from the waves by Botticelli done wittingly or not in the image of the Virgin Mary. And well might she have approved of the *yakshis* of Sanchi and Bhutesar—bejewelled yet revealing the essential symbols of the *Magna Mater*.

With the mention of jewellery we come upon an important difference between the traditional manner of displaying the human figure in India and in Europe. The European nude too frequently is presented as stripped of all covering. In India, however, the figure is typically loaded with jewels, bracelets, bangles, necklaces, girdle, anklets and so on, so as to enhance what lies beneath. What happens in the typical Indian examples—whether Buddhist or Hindu or Jain—is that the body is partially covered, but the very soul is laid bare. Even in the episode of the Stealing of the Clothes when Krishna demands of the *gopis* that they come forth naked, and where the iconography and mystical signifi-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> Goodenough, E. R., *By Light Light, The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, Yale University Press, 1935, pp. 149-50.

cance require full nakedness, the Rajput painter portrays the unclad bodies ornamented.<sup>5</sup> It is as if the Indian artist was unable to conceive of the human body wholly nude. Undoubtedly, despite exceptions such as the formal Tirthankara images, this was often true. But the point we wish to make is this : that the traditional Indian artist, even as the old Hebrew poet who sang of the perfect Bridegroom, " . . . his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires,"<sup>6</sup> literally described the body in terms of jewels.

With drapery as with jewellery we find usages in East and West that are diametrically opposed. How clearly is the thin transparent revealing skirt of a typical image of Parvati to be contrasted with the solid opaque drapery that partly covers Venus de Milo ! Yet it should be remembered that the philosophy which permitted reproductions of the body for itself, whether half hidden or all bare, is as un-Christian as it is un-Hindu. It is in accordance with sound Hindu and Christian, and indeed universal doctrine that the body itself is nothing but raiment. " It is a garment to be cast off presently " to the primitive white Ainu of Japan.<sup>7</sup> In like vein the Bhagavad Gita reminds us that " bodies come to an end " and speaks of " the soul which is clothed in them "—and so the great English lover and poet John Donne writes, " God cloth'd himselfe in vile man's flesh," and tells us furthermore that " . . . he who colour loves, and skinne, loves but their oldest clothes." The whole philosophy of nakedness, and incidentally of clothing, is beautifully summed up in the words of an English nun who flourished in the XIVth and XVth centuries, Julian of Norwich. In her *Revelations of Divine Love* she writes :

" For as the body is clad in the cloth and the flesh in the skin and the bones in the flesh and the heart in the whole, so are we, soul and body, clad in the Goodness of God and enclosed."

Against the profane error that the West has made in glorifying the nude, an error that is fast becoming global in scope, the sacred tradition of any land will provide a sure defence. In the final analysis, we may say that, East or West, that which is in the artist's and the viewer's mind determines whether the portrayal of the naked human figure is a matter of indecent exposure or a vehicle of Divine Revelation.

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* rendering of this subject in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A.

<sup>6</sup> Old Testament, " The Song of Solomon," V, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Batchelor, John, *Ainu Life and Lore*, p. 1.



## DO CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN?

BY MARCO PALLIS (GREECE)

"If a man does not honour his own house, it falls down and crushes him."—*Greek Proverb.*

**D**URING an exchange of letters that took place between Ānanda Coomaraswamy and the present writer during the war years, discussion once happened to turn on the question of traditional dress and its neglect, a subject which had frequently occupied my mind in the course of various journeys through the Himalayan borderlands. We both agreed that this question was of crucial importance at the present time, a touchstone by which much else could be judged. Dr. Coomaraswamy (who henceforth will usually be denoted simply by his initials A.K.C.) then informed me that his own earliest publication on any subject other than Geology was precisely concerned with this question of dress; the paper referred to bore the title of "Borrowed Plumes" (Kandy, 1905) and was called forth by its author's indignation at a humiliating incident he witnessed while staying in a remote district of Ceylon. He further suggested that I might some day treat the same theme in greater detail: the opportunity has now come for complying with his wishes, by way of my own personal tribute to one whose knowledge has made of him the qualified interpreter and champion of the traditional conception of life not only in India but everywhere. All that remains, therefore, is for me to apply to the subject chosen that dialectical method, so typically Indian, with which A.K.C. himself has made us familiar in his later works: that is to say, the question at issue must first be presented under its most intellectual aspect, by connecting it with universal principles; after which it becomes possible, by a process of deduction, to show the developments to which those principles lend themselves in various contingencies; until finally their application can be extended, if so required, to the field of human action, whether by way of doing or undoing. Furthermore, appeal should be made, wherever possible, to authorities, Hindu, Islamic and other, such reference being primarily intended as a guarantee of traditional authenticity, as against a merely human, personal and private expression of opinion on the part of the writer.

\* \* \* \*

Fundamentally, the question of what kind of clothes a person may or may not wear (like any other similar question) is a matter of *svadharma*, an application of that law or norm of behaviour which is intrinsic to every being in virtue of its own particular mode of existence (*svabhava*). By conforming to his norm a man *becomes* what he *is*, thus realizing the full extent of his possibilities; in so far as he fails, he accepts a measure of self-contradiction and disintegrates accordingly.

The late Sir John Woodroffe, in *Bhārata Shakti* (Ganesh, 1921)—a work that ought to be in the hands of every Indian and more especially the young—quotes George Tyrrel as having once written: "I begin to think that the only real sin is suicide or *not being oneself*." The author was probably thinking in individual terms only; nevertheless, this statement contains echoes of a doctrine of universal scope—from which all its relative

validity at the individual level is derived—namely, that the ultimate and only sin is *not to be One Self*, ignorance (*avidyā*) of *What one is*, belief that one is *other* than the Self—indeed, on that reckoning we, one and all, are engaged in committing self-murder daily and hourly and we shall continue to do so, paying the penalty meanwhile, until such time as we can finally *recollect ourselves*, thus “becoming what we are.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that there are three degrees of conformity (*islam*) to the truth: firstly, everyone is *muslim* from the very fact of being at all, since, do what he will, he cannot conceivably move one hairsbreadth out of the orbit of the Divine Will that laid down for him the pattern of his existence; secondly, he is *muslim* in so far as he recognizes his state of dependence and behaves accordingly—this level is represented by his conscious attachment to a tradition, whereby he is able to be informed of what he is and of the means to realize it; and thirdly, he is *muslim* through having achieved perfect conformity, so that henceforth he is identical with his own Self, beyond all fear of parting. In Hindu parlance this same doctrine might be expressed as follows: every being is *yogī* in that any kind of existence apart from the Self is a sheer impossibility, even in the sense of an illusion; it is a *yogī*—called thus by courtesy, as it were, in so far as it strives, by the use of suitable disciplines (*sādhana*), to realize Self-union; it is *the Yogī* in virtue of having made that union effective. No element in life can therefore be said to lie outside the scope of *yoga*.

What individual man is, he owes, positively, to his inherent possibilities and, negatively, to his limitations; the two together, by their mutual interplay, constitute his *svabhava* and are the factors which make him uniquely qualified (*adhikārī*) for the filling of a certain part in the Cosmic “Play” (*līlā*), for which part he has been “cast” by the Divine Producer. Neither possibilities nor limiting conditions are of his own choice—not his either to accept, select or evade. The relative freedom of will which he enjoys within the limits assigned to him is but a translation, into the individual mode, of that limitless and unconditional freedom which the Principle enjoys universally. Individual responsibility, therefore, applies solely to the manner of playing the allotted part; this, however, presupposes some opportunity of comparing the individual performance throughout with its pattern, as subsisting in the intellect of the dramatist; but for some means of access to this standard of comparison, all judgment must be exercised at random. The authentic source of such information can only be the dramatist himself, so that its communication implies the receiving of a favour or “grace” at his hands, by a handing-over of the required knowledge, either directly or through some indirect channel—in other words, an act of “tradition” is implied. As for the

<sup>1</sup> Following Tyrrel, we have used the word “suicide” here in its more usual and unfavourable sense, as denoting an extremity of self-abuse; it can, however, be taken in a different sense, when it is far from constituting a term of reproach: we are referring to the voluntary self-immolation implied in a phrase like that of Meister Eckhart when he says that “the soul must put itself to death” or in the Buddhist “*atta-m-jaho*” (= “self-noughting” in Mediaeval English), which coincides, on the other hand, with *bhāvit’ atto* (= Self-made-become). This whole doctrine, and ultimately our basic thesis in this essay, rests on the principle that “as there are two in him who is both Love and Death, so there are, as all tradition affirms unanimously, two in us; although not two of him or two of us, nor even one of him and one of us, but only one of both. As we stand now, in between the first beginning and the last end, we are divided against ourselves, essence from nature, and therefore see him likewise divided against himself and from us.” This quotation is taken from A.K.C.’s two-pronged essay *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York, 1943); the section dealing with Theology and Autology is strongly recommended to all who wish to understand the meaning of the universal axiom “*duo sunt in homine*.” We say “Be yourself” to someone who is misbehaving: it is in fact, only the carnal self (*nafs*) or soul that *can* misbehave, the Self is infallible. Hence for the former an ultimate suicide is essential. As between the outer and inner man, only the latter is the Man (the image of God), the outer man being the “shadow” or “vehicle” or “house” or “garment” of the inner, just as the world is the Lord’s “garment” (Cp. *Isha Upanishad* I, and Philo, *Moses* II, 135).

## DO CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN ?

carrying out of the task in practice, by faithful imitation of the pattern as traditionally revealed, that is a question of using the tools one has been given, never of forging new ones. Furthermore, in so far as one has been led, from any reasons of contingent utility, to extend the range of one's natural tools by artificial adjuncts, these too must, in some sort, be treated as supplementary attributes (*upādhi*) of the individuality: whatever equipment or "ornament" (the primary meaning of both these words is the same) may be required, it must be of such a character and quality as to harmonize with the general purpose in view, which is the realization, first at an individual and then at every possible level, of what one is.

\* \* \* \*

Of the many things a man puts to use in the pursuit of his earthly vocation, there are none, perhaps, which are so intimately bound up with his whole personality as the clothes he wears. For the purposes of this paper all the more obviously utilitarian considerations influencing the forms of dress, such as climate, sex, occupation and social status can be taken for granted; here we are especially concerned with the complementary aspect of any utility, that of its significance, whence is derived its power to become an integrating or else a disintegrating factor in men's lives. As for the actual elements which go to define a particular form of apparel, the principal ones are shape or "cut," material, colour and ornamental features, if any, including fastenings and also trimmings of every sort.

The first point to be noted is that any kind of clothing greatly modifies the appearance of a person, the apparent change extending even to his facial expression; this can easily be proved by observing the same individual wearing two quite distinct styles of dress. Though one knows that the man underneath is the same, the impression he makes on the bystanders is markedly different. It is evident, therefore, that we have here the reproduction of a cosmic process, by the clothing of a self-same entity in a variety of appearances; on that showing, the term "dress" can fittingly be attached to any and every appearance superposed upon the stark nakedness of the Real, extending to all the various orders of manifestation which, separately or collectively, are included in the "seventy thousand veils obscuring the Face of *Allah*." In view of this far-reaching analogy, it is hardly surprising if, at the individual level also, dress is endowed with such a power to veil (or reveal) as it has.<sup>2</sup>

For the human being, his choice of dress, within the limits of whatever resources are actually available to him, is especially indicative of three things: firstly, it shows what that man regards as compatible with a normal human state, with human dignity; secondly, it indicates how he likes to picture himself and what kind of attributes he would prefer to manifest; thirdly his choice will be affected by the opinion he would wish his neighbours to have of him, this social consideration and the previous factor of self-respect being so closely bound up together as to interact continually.

According to his idea of the part he is called upon to play in the world, so does a man clothe himself; a correct or erroneous conception of the nature of his part is therefore fundamental to the whole question—the common phrase "to dress the part" is admirably expressive. No better illustration can be given of the way dress can work on the mind

<sup>2</sup> The concepts of change of clothes and becoming (*bhāva*) are inseparable: Being (*bhūti*) only can be naked, in that, as constituting the principle of manifestation, it remains itself in the Unmanifest. Ultimately, the whole task of "shaking off one's bodies" (or garments) is involved—these including all that contributes to the texture of the outer self "that is not my Self."

than one taken from that little world of make-believe called the theatre : it is a commonplace of theatrical production that from the moment an actor has " put on his motley " and applied the appropriate " make-up," he tends to feel like another person, so that his voice and movements almost spontaneously begin to exhale the flavour (*rasa*) of the new character he represents. The same individual, wearing the kingly robes and crown, paces majestically across the stage ; exchanging them for a beggar's rags, he whines and cringes ; a hoary wig is sufficient to impart to his voice a soft and quavering sound ; he buckles on a sword and the same voice starts issuing peremptory commands. Indeed, if the " impersonation " be at all complete, the actor almost becomes that *other* man whose clothes he has borrowed, thus " forgetting who he is " ; it is only afterwards, when he is restored " to his right mind " that he discovers the truth of the saying that, after all, " clothes do not make the man."

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has paid a tribute to this power of dress to mould a personality in the following rather humorous saying :—" The nature of man changes with each *upādhi*. When a man wears black-bordered muslin, the love-songs of Nidhu Babu come naturally to his lips and he begins to play cards and flourishes a stick as he goes out for a walk. Even though a man be thin, if he wears English boots he immediately begins to whistle ; and if he has to mount a flight of stairs, he leaps up from one step to another like a *sahib*."

This testimony of the Sage can be matched by evidence drawn from a very different quarter :—When one studies the history of various political tyrannies which, during recent centuries, have deliberately set out to undermine the traditional order with a view to its replacement by the " humanism " of the modern West, one is struck by a truly remarkable unanimity among them in respect of the policy both of discouraging the national costume and of hostility towards the Spiritual Authority as constituted in their particular tradition ; these dictators were no fools, at least in a worldly sense, and if they have agreed in associating these two things in their minds and in making them the first target for their attack, even to the neglect of other seemingly more urgent matters, that is because in both cases they instinctively sensed the presence of something utterly incompatible with the anti-traditional movement they wished to launch ; as they rightly divined, the costume implied a symbolical participation (*bhakti*) in that " other-worldly " influence which the Spiritual Authority was called upon to represent more explicitly in the field of doctrine.

The Tsar Peter I of Russia seems to have been about the first to perceive how much hung upon the question of dress, and when he decided that his country should " face West," politically and culturally, he made it his business to compel the members of the governing classes to give up their Muscovite costume in favour of the coat and breeches of Western Europe, while at the same time he seriously interfered in the constitution of the Orthodox Church, with a view to bringing it under State control on the model of the Protestant churches of Prussia and England. Likewise in Japan, after 1864, one of the earliest " reforms " introduced by the modernising party was the replacement of the traditional court dress by the ugly frock-coat then in vogue at Berlin, by which the Japanese officials were made to look positively grotesque ; moreover, this move was accompanied by a certain attitude of disfavour towards the Buddhist institutions in the country, though government action concerning them did not take on an extreme form. In many other countries of Europe and Asia reliance was placed rather upon the force of example from above ; the official classes adopted Western clothes and customs, leaving the population

at large to follow in its own time, further encouraged by the teaching it received in Westernised schools and universities.

The classical example, however, is that afforded by the Kemalist revolution in Turkey, a distinction it owes both to its far-reaching character and to the speed with which the designed changes were effected: in that case we have a military dictator, borne to power on the crest of a wave of popular enthusiasm, as the leader in a *Jihad* in which his genius earned him (falsely, as it proved) the title of *Ghazi*, who no sooner had overcome his foreign enemies in the field than he turned his power against the Islamic tradition itself, sweeping the *Khalifat* out of the way like so much old rubbish and plundering the endowments bequeathed to sacred use by ancient piety; while under the new legislation *dervishes* were classed with common vagabonds. It was another of Kemal's earliest acts to prohibit the Turkish national costume, not merely in official circles but throughout the nation, and to impose in its place the shoddy reach-me-downs of the European factories. Some thousands of *mullahs*, who dared to oppose him, earned the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the hangmen commissioned by the "Ghazi." Meanwhile, in the rest of the Moslem world, hardly a protest was raised; in India, where the movement to defend the *Khalifat* had been of great political service to Kemal in his early days, only the red Ottoman fez, adopted by many sympathisers with the Turkish cause, still survives (though proscribed in its own country) as a rather pathetic reminder of the inconsistencies to which human nature is sometimes able to sink.

\* \* \* \*

It may now well be asked what, in principle, determines the suitability or otherwise of any given form of clothing, and indeed what has prompted Man, in the first place, to adopt the habit of wearing clothes at all?—for it is evident that a change so startling as this must have corresponded to some profound modification in the whole way of life of mankind. To discover the principle at issue, one must first remember that every possibility of manifestation—that of clothing for instance—has its root in a corresponding possibility of the Unmanifest, wherein it subsists as in its eternal cause, of which it is itself but an explicit affirmation. Metaphysically, Being is Non-Being affirmed, the Word is but the uttering of Silence; similarly, once Nakedness is affirmed, clothing is "invented." The principle of Clothing resides, therefore, in Nakedness. In seeking to throw light on this fundamental aspect of the doctrine, one cannot do better than refer to the Cosmological Myth common to the three branches issued from the traditional stem of Abraham, of *Seyidna Ibrahim*. According to the Biblical story, Adam and Eve, that is to say, primordial mankind in the Golden Age (*Satya yuga*), were dwelling in the Garden of Eden, at the centre of which grew the Tree of Life or World Axis (*Meru danda*). The Axis, which "macrocosmically" is assimilated to a ray of the Supernal Sun (*Aditya*) and "microcosmically" to the Intellect (*Buddhi*), occupies the *centre* of human existence, all other faculties of knowledge or action being grouped hierarchically round the Intellect as its ministers and tools, none encroaching, each sticking to its allotted work in conformity with its own *dharma*; this state of inward harmony being, moreover, externally reflected in the peaceful relations existing between Man and all his fellow-creatures around him, animals, plants and others. It is also recorded that Adam conversed daily and familiarly with God, that is to say, the individual self was always immediately receptive of the influence emanating from the Universal Self, "one-pointed" (*ekāgrya*) concentration being for it a spontaneous act requiring the use of no auxiliary means. Such is the picture given of the state of *normal* humanity, or the Primordial State as the

Taoist doctrine calls it, which corresponds to that state known as "childlikeness" (*bālya*) in the Hindu or "poverty" (*al faqr*) in the Islamic doctrine, the latter term betokening the fact that the being's Self-absorption is free from all competing interests, here symbolised by "riches"; for this state "nakedness" would not have been an inappropriate name either.

The Bible story goes on to describe the loss of that condition of human normality, by telling how Eve, corrupted by the Serpent (an embodiment of the *tamasic* tendency) persuaded her husband to taste of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, with fatal results; that is to say, the original unity of vision gives way to *dualism*, a schism takes place between self and Self, in which indeed alone consists the "original sin" of Christian theology, containing as it does the seed of every kind of opposition, of which "myself" versus "other" provides the type. And now comes a detail which is of particular interest for our thesis: the very first effect of Adam and Eve's eating of the dualistic fruit was a feeling of "shame" at their own nakedness, a self-consciousness by which they were driven to cover their bodies with fig-leaves, thus fashioning the earliest example of human clothing.<sup>3</sup>

The rest of the symbolism is not hard to unravel. For one still in the state of *bālya* the thought never could arise "I must be clothed," because *bālya*, by definition, implies the clear recognition that the individuality, including all its sheaths (*kosha*) more or less diaphanous or opaque, is itself but a cloak for the true Self; to clothe it would be tantamount to piling dress upon dress. From this it follows that, for one who has realized that primordial state, the most natural proceeding would be to discard all clothes; one is on sure ground in saying that the *nanga sannyāsin* or *digambara* adequately represents the position of one who is well on the way to rejoining the Self.

Once there has been a departure from the indistinction of this primitive nakedness, the various traditional ways part company, thus producing a wide diversity of types in each of which certain aspects of the symbolism of clothing are predominant, to the partial overshadowing of others; this, indeed, is the general principle of distinction as between any one traditional form and another, by which each is made to display a "genius" for certain aspects of the truth, leaving to its neighbours the task of emphasising the complementary aspects.

Space does not allow of a detailed study even of the main types into which clothing can be classified; there are, however, one or two which must be mentioned: the first of these, as a recent letter of A.K.C. himself explained, represents the most characteristic constituent of Hindu clothing both ancient and modern, and consists of a length of material woven all of a piece, without joins—the "tailored" styles, as worn by Indian Muslims for instance, come into another category. In this type of single-piece wrap as commonly worn by Hindus, therefore, we are dealing with a "seamless garment," like that of Christ.

It will be remembered that at His Crucifixion the soldiers who stripped Jesus of His raiment were unwilling to tear the seamless robe, so they cast lots for it: as for the Saviour Himself, He was raised *naked* on His Cross, as was only fitting at the moment when

<sup>3</sup>In connection with Adam's "shame," a Jewish traditional commentary (Philo, *IA*. 11.55 f.) offers a strikingly concordant testimony, as follows:—"The mind that is clothed neither in vice nor in virtue (i.e. does not partake of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), but is absolutely stripped of either, is naked, just as the soul of an infant (= *bālya*)."  
It should likewise be noted that in Judaism the High Priest entered *naked* into the Holy of Holies—"the noblest form, if stripping and becoming naked," noblest, that is to say, as distinguished from e.g. Noah's nakedness, when he was drunk.—In the same connection Shri Krishna's theft of the *Gopis'* clothes (*Vastraharana*) has an obvious bearing.



the Western *Avatāra* was discarding the last remaining appearance of duality, assumed for "exemplary" reasons, and resuming the principal nakedness of the Self. Christian theologians have often pointed out that the symbolical garment of Christ is the Tradition itself, single and "without parts," like the Supreme *Guru* who reveals it; to "rend the seamless garment" is equivalent to a rupture with tradition (which must, of course, not be confused with an adaptation of its form, in a strictly orthodox sense, to meet changing conditions).

Tradition is a coherent whole, though never "systematic" (for a "system" denotes a water-tight limitation of form); once torn, the seamless garment cannot be "patched" simply by means of a "heretical" (literally "arbitrary") sewing on of elements borrowed at random—those who think of saving their tradition by compromising with modernism might well take note of the words of Christ Himself: "No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse" (St. Matthew, ix, 16).

Some mention must also be made of what might be called the "monastic habit," founded on a general type consisting of some plain material shaped to a rather austere design or even deliberately put together from rags, as frequently occurs in Buddhism. These forms of apparel are always meant to evoke the idea of poverty and may be taken to symbolise an aspiration towards the state of *bhāya*. To the foregoing category might be attached, but in a rather loose sense, the self-coloured cotton homespun (*khaddar*) which, in India to-day, has become the emblem of a certain movement. In this case, too, the idea of poverty has been uppermost; but it must be said, in fairness, that some of its supporters, possibly affected by an unconscious bias towards westernisation, have been at pains to disclaim any other purpose for their hand-spinning than a purely economic one, that of helping to reclothe the many poor people who have been deprived of their vocational life and reduced to starvation under pressure of modern industrialism. This would be tantamount to admitting that *khaddar* had a utilitarian purpose but no spiritual significance, and that the movement to promote its use was essentially "in front of (=outside) the temple," which is the literal meaning of the word "profane." It is hard to believe, however, that such could be the intention of the saintly founder of the movement, since he has never ceased to preach and exemplify the doctrine that no kind of activity, even political, can for a moment be divorced from faith in God and self-dedication in His service, a view which, more than all else, has earned for him the hatred of the "progressives" of every hue, who have not been slow in applying to him the (to them) opprobrious epithets of "mediaeval", "reactionary" and "traditional."

Apart from the two special examples just given, we must confine ourselves to a few quite general remarks on the subject of traditional dress, for all the great variety of types it has displayed throughout the ages and in every part of the world. By calling a thing "traditional" one thereby relates it immediately to an idea which always, and necessarily, implies the recognition of a supra-human influence: to quote a phrase from A.K.C.'s writings: "All traditional art can be 'reduced' to theology, or is, in other words, dispositive to a reception of truth." Thus, the costume which a man wears as a member of any traditional society is the sign, partly conscious and partly unconscious, that he accepts a certain view of the human self and its vocation, both being envisaged in relation to one Principle in which their causal origin (*alpha*) and their final end (*omega*) coincide. It is inevitable that such a costume should be governed by a *Canon*, representing the continuity of the tradition, the stable element, Being; within that canon there will, however,

be ample room for individual adaptation, corresponding to the variable element in existence, impermanence, Becoming.

In tribal civilizations, which are most logical in these matters, the art of dress and self-adornment is carried to a point where the details of human apparel are an almost exact symbolical equivalent to the draperies, head-dress and jewels that indicate its *upādhis* in a *pratima*; moreover, such costumes are usually covered with metaphysical emblems, though their wearers are by no means always aware of their precise significance; nevertheless, they reverence them greatly and undoubtedly derive a form of spiritual nourishment and power (*shakti*) from their presence. Furthermore, it is at least rather suggestive that tribal costume often entails a considerable degree of nudity and is, in appearance, extremely reminiscent of the dresses of gods and goddesses, as portrayed in the ancient paintings and sculptures; so much so, that a friend recently suggested that the forms of tribal life in general constitute survivals from a period anterior to our present *Kali-yuga*. It is not surprising that both "Christian" missionaries and the apostles of modern materialism (the two seemingly contradictory motives being, indeed, not infrequently found in the same person) should be glad whenever they succeed in inducing some simple-minded peasant or tribesman to forego the natural safeguards provided for him by his native dress and customs; for after that he is only too easily demoralised and will fall a ready victim to their truly "Satanic" persuasions.

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One last type of clothing now remains to be considered, that specific to modern Europe and America, which is also the type that is threatening to swamp all others, to the eventual abolition of every distinction, whether traditional, racial, or largely even individual. This "modern dress," through its development parallel with that of a certain conception of Man and his needs, has by now become the recognized uniform to be assumed by all converts to the creed of "individualism," of mankind regarded as sufficing unto itself; and this idolatry of the human individuality, far from enhancing its dignity, has had a precisely contrary effect since, by divorcing it from the knowledge of its transcendent principle, it has emptied it of that which gave it all its meaning, whence also was derived its usefulness as an instrument of realization; small wonder, therefore, if the object of individual self-adulation has, in practice, not been raised, but lowered to the level of "mass—or economic—man," of an atom in a social composite, to be distinguished from his fellow-atoms by little beyond his bare name. It is only fair to recognize that modern dress is admirably fitted to suggest such a character in the wearer: its combination of "free-and-easiness" with extreme sophistication, its countless vulnerable points in the shape of studs and buttons, many of them functionally useless, the shoes that constrict the shape of the foot and upset the natural poise of the body, the chemical dyes which are staring when they would be brilliant and merely look drab when they would be sober, all these are factors worthy of mention; besides, one has the inane vagaries of "fashion," of change induced for the sake of change—in marked contrast to the essential stability of traditional things—and all the processes imposed by production in vast quantity which both denature the materials they handle and also make of the workmen mere cogs in a machine, robbing them of all delight in their work—these and many other more subtle factors concur in turning the modern dress into something subversive of human quality, something to which the adjective "untouchable" might well apply.

An objection might, however, be raised here, which is as follows:—The Western

dress of to-day is, after all, but a lineal development of what formerly was the costume worn in Christian Europe, at that time traditionally equivalent, therefore, to whatever existed elsewhere: it may be asked, how comes it that its present descendant is opposable to all other types, so that it alone is made to bear the labels of "anti-traditional" and "profane"? Historically, the facts given above are incontrovertible, no need to deny them: but far from invalidating the foregoing argument, they only serve to make it the more intelligible: for it must be remembered that error never exists in a "pure" state, nor can it, in strict logic, be opposed to truth, since truth has no opposite; an error can but represent an impoverishment, a distortion, a travesty of some particular aspect of the truth, which, to one gifted with insight, will still be discernible even through all the deformations that it has suffered. Every error is *muslim*, as it were in spite of itself, according to the first of the three degrees of conformity as given in a preceding section, and it cannot be referred to any separate principle of its own, on pain of accepting a radical dualism in the Universe, a ditheism, a pair of alternative Realities. Anything can be called "profane" in so far as it is viewed apart from its principle, but things in themselves always remain essentially sacred.

In the case of dress, this it is that explains the fact that many Westerners, though wearing a costume which is as un-christian as it is un-Hindu or un-Islamic, are less adversely affected thereby (which does not mean unaffected) than Asiatics, Africans or even Eastern Europeans; with the former, parallel with the degeneration there has also been some measure of adaptation, bringing with it a kind of immunity—the disease is endemic, whereas in the latter cases it has all the virulence of an epidemic. Furthermore, since, as we have seen, a trace of the original traditional influence must needs persist through every corruption, those to whom this form of dress properly belongs are enabled, if they will, to make a restricted use of whatever small element of quality still remains. Not so, however, in the case of their Eastern imitator—for such as him the change to modern dress involves so complete a contradiction of all his mental and physical habits as to result in a sudden violent rending of his personality, bringing him near to complete disintegration. The outward signs are to be met with all over the world: pompousness mistaken for dignity, insolence for independence, familiarity confused with friendliness, academic pedantry with learning, an accumulation of rubbish taken for genuine wealth, all these are common symptoms that allow of but one diagnosis.

Some people affect to believe that a movement to submerge specific differences reveals a unifying tendency in mankind, but they are suffering under a great delusion in that they mistake for true unity what is only its parody, uniformity. For any individual, the realizing in full of the possibilities inherent in his *svabhāva* marks the limit of achievement, after which there is nothing further to be desired. As between two such beings, who are wholly themselves, no bone of contention can exist, since neither can offer to the other anything over and above what he already possesses; while, on the supra-individual level their common preoccupation with the One and only Self, the central point where all ways meet, is the guarantee of a unity which nothing will disturb: one can therefore say that the maximum of differentiation is the condition most favourable to unity. Against this, when two beings are together subjected to the steam-roller of uniformity, not only will they both be frustrated in respect of some of the elements includable in their own personal realization, but they will, besides, be placed in the position of having to compete in the same narrow field; and this can only result in a heightening of oppositions—the greater the degree of uniformity imposed, the more inescapable are the resulting

conflicts : and may it not be deeper causes of this kind, the fruits of progressive modernisation, which are largely responsible for the accentuation of the "communal" cleavage in quite recent years, such as many deplore but cannot explain ? This suggestion is worth a thought perhaps.

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Enough has now been said to enable the reader to appreciate the general principle that one has been at pains to illustrate : if a particular example was chosen, that is because it lent itself most easily to such an exposition; but it would have been equally possible to have picked on some different factor pertaining to the Active Life, to the *Karma-Mārga*, say, the furnishing of people's homes, or music and musical instruments, or else schools ; since each of these, and others like them, is governed by the self-same law of *svadharma* and it is only a question of effecting an appropriate transposition of the argument to fit each particular case. Behind the widespread defection from the national dress and customs, especially among the uppermost sections of society, there undoubtedly lurks a deep-seated loss of spirituality, showing itself on the surface in a corresponding loss of self-respect and of that sense of discrimination which is everywhere hailed as the mark of the truly strong man. Under the inverted snobbishness prevailing in the East to-day and taking the form of what Henry James described as "a superstitious valuation of European civilization" one cannot but recognize a gnawing sense of defeat ; it is that feeling which will make a man send his children at their most plastic and impressionable age to be "educated" through the medium of a foreign language in totally un-Indian subjects, or which will cause him to repeat wholesale the latest politico-social slogans or the most dubious pronouncements of "modern science" as if they were *shruti*.<sup>4</sup>

No need to search for examples of this kind of attitude : they are only too common around us ; the writer would, however, like to mention one such example from his own experience, as being particularly revealing. In 1937 he was visited in his home by the Mongol lama Wangyal, who came over in order to instruct him in the *Mahāyāna*. While in England, the lama invariably wore his Tibetan dress and not only was he never stared at or treated with discourtesy, but people quite often even went out of their way to comment with approval on the fact that he had not discarded his own costume ; for ordinary people the world over tend to respect a man who is willing to stand up for himself. On the journey out from Calcutta it was the same story ; his English fellow-travellers took him at his own valuation ; one is ashamed to publish it, but it was some of the *Indian* first-class passengers who actually tried to frighten the lama into adopting European clothes, telling him that in England he would be made into a laughing-stock or otherwise molested. No further comment is needed on this painful story ; the facts speak for themselves. However, it might also be mentioned, incidentally, that all Indians wishing to follow the lama's dignified example but fearing to do so for reasons of climate can easily solve that problem, if they be Hindus, by an adaptation of the costume worn by their fellows in the Himalaya, where the winter is at least as severe as in England ; while for Moslems, their ordinary style of dress as worn in Northern India will stand up to any

<sup>4</sup> To the unfortunate people fallen into this frame of mind—most of whom pass for being "educated"—it might well be said : "You can't change (bleach) your skins, so you change your clothes, fondly hoping thereby to make yourselves more like those 'coloured Englishmen' which it was the avowed purpose of Lord Macaulay's educational system, to produce through its imposition of the foreign language." Macaulay himself was doubtless sincere in his intentions, for he made no secret of his ignorant contempt for the whole of Oriental culture as compared with that of the West ; what is almost beyond belief is that his victims should have come to despise themselves to the point of co-operating in the cultural debauching of themselves and their own children.

weather if made of a somewhat thicker material; another friend of the writer's always was so clad while in London and he too, it should be said, won universal praise for doing so.<sup>5</sup> What is, however, undesirable is a resorting to absurd hybrid costumes, formed out of haphazard mixtures of bits of Indian and European clothing, the latter usually worn the wrong way. Such incongruities, when seen in one or the other continent, are always humiliating to the person concerned, whether he be conscious of it or not.

Above all, let no one toy with the belief that, in a time of world-wide confusion like the present, questions of form no longer matter, that it is only "the spirit" that counts and that "the letter" is dead and done with; one can only refer any persons so deluded to another essay appearing in this book, that of Mr. F. Schuon on "Forms in Art." There they will see clearly for themselves that at a moment when things are collapsing right and left it is forms, "the letter," that provides the last life-line uniting bewildered man to whatever remains of his spirituality; at the worst, the observance of forms can prevent him from slipping still further into the mire; at the best, it is by that life-line that he may gradually pull himself back, chastened perhaps and therefore ready to regain for himself and his children the spiritual heritage he had so nearly forfeited for ever. One's native costume—or indeed any other formal "support" of that order—is but a case in point. One knows that the assumption of the inhuman modern dress has often been the first step in the flight from tradition; it will be but poetic justice for its divestment to mark the first step on the path of return. In itself such action may seem little enough, for dress is not the man himself, admittedly. Nevertheless, if it be true to say that "clothes do not make the man," yet can it as truly be declared that they do represent a most effective influence in his making—or his unmaking.

<sup>5</sup> It should also be remembered that Indian women, with rare exceptions, do not discard the *Sāri* when travelling abroad, though their use of such things as high-heeled shoes lends itself to some criticism; on the whole it is the male that everywhere has shown itself the more timid sex.

## INDIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD

BY CAPTAIN ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI (ENGLAND)

THE consequences of the impact of Western civilization on the native races of the East have varied as the result of so many different factors, that at this moment in history it is not possible to formulate any general principles concerning them. All we know is that, whilst here and there, certain races have succumbed and even disappeared, elsewhere they have proved resistant enough not merely to survive, but also actually to multiply and flourish despite all the foreigner's attempts, however well-meaning and benevolent, to modify their culture-forms and to wean them from their traditions.

We are credibly informed by anthropologists that often all that is needed for the ultimate extinction of a particular race is, not violence, disease, or some vicious habit introduced by the European, but merely the despondency generated by the imposition of new forms of behaviour and belief—a state of mind which, by diminishing their zest and *joie de vivre*, undermines their will to survive.

Nor, when we grasp how deep attachment to native culture-forms may be, even among the random-bred stocks of Europe, need we be surprised to learn that, among peoples whose capacity for change and for suffering change has a tempo different from our own, the impact of new and powerful culture, sometimes imposed rapidly with every artifice of proselytization, force and example, has resulted in a complete renunciation of every hope, belief and desire.

Indeed, seen in this light, what chiefly arouses astonishment is not that some races should have succumbed and vanished, but that all have not followed suit. For when the European first began to "explore" the East in search of trade outlets on a large scale and of territories and peoples on whom the "inestimable benefits" of Western civilization could be bestowed, he was already immensely powerful in a material sense, compared with those he confronted.

He was in a position to coerce recalcitrants and by means of the importunacies of his proselytizing and commercial agents, to provoke acts of hostility which often provided the excuse for retaliatory military measures. If, therefore, certain races survived the impact, not only as a united people, but also, and above all, as a community still observing their traditional culture-forms, including the worship of the gods of their fathers, the phenomenon partook of the nature of a feat so stupendous in recuperative power and stamina as to amount almost to a miracle—a miracle of resistance, faith and loyalty.

Well, we now know that, up to a point, India performed that miracle. Thanks to the relatively high evolution and intricacy of her own culture, her large population as compared with the numbers of her invaders, and, above all, of the high intellectual level of her leaders, both Hindu and Moslem, and their steadfastness as custodians of the people's cherished habits of mind and body, India should, in the millenniums to come, stand as a proverb and example among nations, as a country which, against forces almost everywhere



else triumphant, contrived for centuries—in fact until the eve of the ultimate recovery of her freedom—to uphold and continue, without irretrievable loss, her own life and her own way of life.

This miraculous achievement was due, perhaps chiefly, to the causes I have enumerated. But one cause, not mentioned so far, which cannot have been insignificant in its effect, was the power of endurance of the people as a whole and their dogged determination not to allow the constant spectacle of a foreign race of masters in their midst, or the constant parade before their eyes of foreign practices and forms of behaviour, to deflect them so hopelessly from the path of their ancestors as to render regeneration impossible.

True, the Western visitation was not without effect. It left scars everywhere. On native life, for instance, its influence was marked. The industrialization of certain parts of India created new conditions foreign to the habits of the many. But there are still authorities who believe that, although social usages may have suffered modification, European influence on Hindu thought and religion, despite intensive, expensive and long-enduring Christian propaganda, has been negligible.

Now, it is here, at the heart of Indian culture, that the source, by still remaining pure, promises to regenerate even the social usages of the people. Above all, it promises to resuscitate their arts and crafts—the “material” aspects of their civilization—by repairing the damage suffered from their impact with a civilization like that of Europe which long ago divorced arts and crafts from any metaphysical source and made mass-production not only possible but indicated.

How little this soulless Western civilization impresses the East can be gathered from the bearing of a Hindu leader like Gandhi. A logical nationalist, he believes India can dispense with the material culture of the West because she has her own to give to the world. He abhors European technology and would gladly see even the railways of India abolished. Hence his propaganda and constructive work in rehabilitating customs opposed to European industrialism.

But, in this matter, no one has done more than Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, and his work holds out all the more hope and promise seeing that, by his conviction concerning the dependence of a culture on its metaphysical roots, he bases the renaissance of India on his people’s drawing their strength for recovery from the one source which has suffered least from Western influence—Hindu thought and religion.

This is not to say or infer that Mahatma Gandhi is not also a deeply religious man. But whilst he has upheld the nationalist ideal chiefly in the field of politics, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, as long as I have known him, has been the voice of their ancestors to the Indian people, in everything relating to their highest products—their arts and crafts—and the spirit that should inspire them.

As early as 1909, when the material success of their foreign rulers proclaimed a fundamentally different principle, he was telling his people that “nations are made by artists and poets, not by traders and politicians,”<sup>1</sup> and regarding the rebirth of India after the havoc wrought by alien influence, he was arguing that “the only true remedies that can be effectual are the regeneration of Indian taste, and the re-establishment of some standard of quality.”<sup>2</sup>

To the latter point I shall return. Let it suffice now to remark that Coomaraswamy

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in National Idealism*, p. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays in National Idealism*, p. 78.

looked on this re-establishment as essential. For in so doing he set up an ideal fundamentally opposed to that directing Western industrialism and, indeed, every other aspect of Western life. Because, implicit in it is the appeal to the instinct of workmanship which, when once lost, reveals its absence in every department of a people's life, even their politics.<sup>3</sup>

Space allows but one example of this extensive ramification of the European's loss of the instinct of workmanship and, therefore, of a sense of quality. But it will suffice. Gandhi is reported to have said: "I do not believe in the accepted form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives."<sup>4</sup> If the Mahatma meant by these words that he appreciated the full implications of the Parliamentary Vote, he must have been aware that, only when the instinct of workmanship and its sense of quality has vanished from a people can they be induced to vote at all in elections without that self-reproach which overtakes all those whose higher impulses forbid their performing any task badly.

For, seeing that the Parliamentary Vote is given for one of two or more political programmes, represented by their respective candidates; that it is impossible for the ordinary man to know all the economic, moral, sociological and international consequences of the policies involved; and, above all, that the ordinary man, however well educated, is never given *all* the information which would enable him to vote knowledgeably, not to mention wisely, on any political programme, it follows that, in order to vote, every ordinary man and woman in the democracies must first have lost the instinct of workmanship, with its sense of quality, and on that account could perform this task badly without aching self-reproach. That there should be mass-production of shoddy in democratic nations, therefore, and a huge proletariat willing to participate in it, is only another aspect of the same effect.

This is but one instance. But it reveals the wide and deep penetration which the loss of a sense of quality may effect in unexpected and unsuspected quarters of a people's life.

When, therefore, Dr. Coomaraswamy speaks of the "re-establishment of some standard of quality" as one of the true remedies of the disordered present-day life of India, he states a principle much more fundamental than many might suppose. And that it is not mere moral exhortation, which is useless, is shown by his further methods.

He would recreate his people by promoting precisely those types—artists and poets—which, owing to their still possessing a conscience for quality, ultimately make a nation in the desirable sense. And here, again, he comes into sharp conflict with Western ideals, by deprecating the very notion of art-expression prevalent in Europe. He can imagine a fruitful and flourishing national art only as the bloom of sentiments and yardsticks which are the same for the whole people, pervade every phase of their lives, and make them homogeneous at least in values.

He would endorse Nietzsche's claim that "Culture is, above all things, the unity of artistic style in every expression of the life of a people."<sup>5</sup> Hence the stress he lays on "a great tradition imposed on generations of craftsmen of diverse rank."<sup>6</sup> Failing this,

<sup>3</sup> This may seem an unfair charge in view of the fact that, at least, in machinery, Europeans have shown a high standard of quality. In this respect, however, it should be remembered that, in making machines, there is an irreducible minimum of quality below which these contraptions refuse actually to work. With the production of machines, and machine tools, therefore, a certain standard of quality is imposed by the very nature of the product. But in every other product, not so limited, quality is known to be a negligible condition of production to Europeans.

<sup>4</sup> *A Week With Gandhi*, by Louis Fischer, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Thoughts out of Season*, Part I, p. 8.

there occurs what actually exists in the West—a society atomized by individuals all pulling in different directions, all observing conflicting values, and whose artists cannot, therefore, be expressive of more than a limited group or coterie. Thus fame, in Western art, means contriving by self-advertisement and proselytization, to collect behind one a sufficient number of one's fellows who agree to bleat one's name in chorus and, thereby, to create a noise loud enough to make one's merits known. There is no other way to success.—Hence the constant temptation in the art-world of the West for the artist to be *outré*, and often outrageously eccentric. For by this means he collects his noisy crowd more rapidly. The fact that he may be, and often is, an inferior artist all the same, is the principal vice of this kind of artistic production.

As Dr. Coomaraswamy puts it, "Secular and personal art can only appeal to cliques." And he adds, "This is, in fact, the diagnosis of our modern individualistic art, that seven-eighths of it is the work of men who ought to be servants and not masters; while the work of one-eighth (if there be so large a proportion of genius) is necessarily intelligible only to a very small audience."<sup>7</sup>

This must be so; for when fame depends chiefly on the artist's success in gathering behind him a noisy crowd, none of whom need necessarily be authoritative but whose mere mass impresses, the test of his ability to establish himself is not the quality of his art, but his power to make a multitude clamorous about him. Thus, with few exceptions, the leaders and makers of Western nations—artists and poets—only add to the existing confusion and anarchy of their world.

But the hieratic art which integrates a community, and which Coomaraswamy declares "unites a whole race in one spiritual feudalism,"<sup>8</sup> is not, in so far as it harmonizes with the values governing a people's taste, conduct and outlook, the product of the artist or poet. It is the work of creators greater than both of these—the interpreters of the divine spirit at the root of the nation's existence. They it is who first establish that homogeneity of values which, expressed in their art, makes it as much part of the whole as a flower is of the plant on which it grows.

Only where that pervasive homogeneity of values exists is the spontaneous recognition and approval of an art product, consonant with it, the possible feat of the uninformed crowd. Only there does the distinction "subjective" and "objective" disappear. No need then for the artist to blow his own trumpet, or to excel his rival in the height of his kick over the traces! He speaks to his fellows serenely under the influence of the same values, which all observe in every choice of their active life.

The only test of fitness for fame is then, not loudness or outrageousness, but excellence of performance. That is why, in the society Dr. Coomaraswamy and Nietzsche contemplated, the highest achievements are possible; whilst in the sort of society Europe has envolved, art is a sort of subjective chant which, far from receiving spontaneous understanding, has to be "placed" on the market and advertised, after the manner of a patent drug or soap, irrespective of its quality.

If, in the latter form of society, craftsmanship and the production of goods are divorced both from art and from any pervasive values, except those relating to profit, we cannot feel any astonishment. But such a society did not lose its hieratic art deliberately. The loss was gradually suffered as the metaphysical bottom mouldered and ultimately fell out of the scheme of things, and when rulers were so foolish as to suppose that national integration was possible whilst confusion reigned in the realm of values.

<sup>7</sup> *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Truth to tell, the only integrative agent in such a society is the wholly temporary one of War which, when once over, leaves the community even more anarchical than before.

There is but one criticism I wish to make of Dr. Coomaraswamy's thesis as I find it in his published works. And, in view of all he has done, both for the art of India and for art and mankind in general, I make it in all humility and with the deepest respect. But, if I did not make it, I should feel that I had played not only Dr. Coomaraswamy himself false, but also the people whom he loves. For, if it has value, and can help them in any way he would assuredly welcome it, and I should not be a friend of India if I withheld it.

It turns on the question of quality, to which I said I would return. I have expressed my profound approval of the idea that India's recovery depends on the "re-establishment of a standard of quality." But what is the relationship between quality expressed in human products and humanity itself? I submit that this question is of paramount importance and must be answered.

My answer is as follows:—I deny that the products of man, even the society he creates, can be anything but a reflection of himself. For instance, I declare in the teeth, in the false teeth, of modern Europeans, all of whom maintain the contrary, that a creature of conflicts and inner discord cannot produce anything harmonious free from the strains and frictions that ultimately dismember it.

Quality can, therefore, be a virtue only of the product of the man of quality. How are men of quality produced?—They are human organisms in whom, if you took them to pieces, you would find all their parts—muscles, viscera, endocrine glands and general proportions, perfectly balanced and harmonious. They are, and always have been, the outcome of segregated inbred groups; for it is only by segregation and inbreeding that the disturbing factor of disparity between parents can be removed from a people. And the importance of ridding a people of the chance of breeding from disparate parents will best be appreciated when it is remembered that different parts and organs of the body are inherited independently. That is why harmonious and well-balanced organisms cannot be born, except by a fluke, of disparate parents. This also explains why all great cultures have been the creation of island or peninsular peoples, or peoples otherwise naturally or artificially segregated—by rivers, mountain ranges, deserts or deliberately built barriers such as walls. For in such conditions, if there is rigorous elimination of sub-normal types, inbreeding causes disparities to be slowly suppressed, and harmony and balance become possible psychophysical possessions.

Even small groups in an area, not otherwise hemmed in, may become segregated and forced to inbreed, where transport is either lacking or difficult, so that fluidity is discouraged. This was the case in certain areas of England in the Middle Ages.

It is clear that mere quality of this kind is not enough. Otherwise all the races ever met with, all of whom have been inbred, would have produced high cultures. A further essential pre-requisite is that the segregated and inbred race should also possess native gifts of a high order. But, without that innate quality I have described, it is futile to try to re-establish a standard of quality among them, no matter how gifted they may be.

And it is here, alone, that I venture to disagree with Dr. Coomaraswamy's approach. His essentials of nationality are "a geographical unity and a common historic evolution or culture." He denies that race is also an essential condition,<sup>9</sup> nor does he so much as mention the need of a standardization of type such as I have outlined. I reply that, if

<sup>9</sup> *Essays in National Idealism*, p. 7.

we are to expect a high culture, with the homogeneity of values it presupposes, the homogeneity or harmony of the type from which it is expected is a first prerequisite. And to this end, segregation and inbreeding are essential—all the more essential if there has been any mixing of peoples in the area in question in the recent past. For, as Reibmayr shows, even when such mixing has occurred, segregation and inbreeding, accompanied by rigid elimination of discordant types, soon restores homogeneity and, with it, the psycho-physical quality on which recovery and race depend.

Dr. Coomaraswamy has done much more than inspire his people. By his persevering efforts to display before their eyes the supreme achievements in art and craftsmanship of their ancestors, he has also brought these creations to the notice of the foreigner and particularly of the white man of Europe. Personally, I can never forget the startled wonder with which I first examined the valuable series of brochures he published before World War I, under the title *Visvakarma*<sup>10</sup>; just as I can never forget my first sight of the magnificent copper figure of "Natarata, Lord of Dance."<sup>11</sup> Here is something so great in quality of conception and execution that I, at least, cannot believe that the artist responsible for it (unnamed and unknown as he is!<sup>12</sup>) could ever have come of a random-bred, inharmonious and, therefore, unbalanced people.

The difference between my own and Dr. Coomaraswamy's point of view on this matter had to be mentioned here, if my contribution to the symposium in honour of the man who has accomplished so much for India and the world at large, was to be candid and genuine. But it in no way diminishes my admiration and respect for his lifework, or my appreciation of all that I personally owe to him. Indeed, important as it may appear when viewed in isolation, compared with the mass of doctrine on which I wholly agree with him, it is relatively insignificant. But the very sincerity of his purpose and method, by suggesting the same quality to others, impelled me, in this inadequate tribute to his genius, to honour him to the extent of emulating his ever brave and outspoken manner.

One last word. I have known Dr. Coomaraswamy for close on forty years. I regard his unremitting exertions to keep steadily before the eyes of both his own people and the derelict masses of Europe, the eternal truths of social sanity, health and survival, as one of the greatest feats of perseverance and faith that the modern world has witnessed. I have seen one after the other of his books, all of which contained essential features of his precious messages to modern man, passed over and frivolously ignored by the very peoples—Europeans and Americans—who, owing to the hopeless disintegration of their social organization, were actually in the greatest need of learning from them. Meanwhile, I have seen these same peoples, by every step they took, move year by year from bad to worse. I can only hope and trust that India, the land to which he particularly appeals, may accord him a more intelligent and more grateful hearing, than have those who were in most urgent need of his wise counsels. But, whether or not, India responds, and whether or not the teaching which he has offered her be one day assimilated and applied, as I dearly hope it will be, speaking as a European, who has long feared the hour has passed for Europe to benefit from his life-work, I can only say that I regard the chance I have been given to contribute my share towards honouring him and his thought in this his seventieth year, as one of the greatest privileges it has been my lot to enjoy.

<sup>10</sup> The "Sanchi Torso" in Part II is a revelation and surely equal to the best Egyptian work.

<sup>11</sup> Fig. 1 in *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*.

<sup>12</sup> For this question of the artist's anonymity, see *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, pp. 41, 42, and *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, p. 22.

## ACTIVE TRADITION OF THE EAST AND WEST

By ALBERT GLEIZES (FRANCE)

*"Ars sine scientia nihil"*

**A**NANDA K. COOMARASWAMY has indeed done great service to Oriental, and, in particular, Hindu thought. He is to-day its most qualified ambassador. But in considering it in its traditional essence, he has been led beyond its ethnographic limits. This is why he has so often come to compare Eastern with Western thought, for the sake of demonstrating their original identity.

Few Westerners are, to-day, as capable as Coomaraswamy of bringing into relief, beyond the iconographic representations, beyond symbols and signs, the reality of the principle which animates and justifies them. Those very people who, by reason of their priestly function, should be the last to forget that the spirit transcends the letter, seem indeed to have fallen a prey to appearances. Do they not strive, in the name of rationalism which is mere unreason, to satisfy the demands of a philosophical, scientific, and even sociological opportunism, instead of denouncing the fundamental aberration which has led men away from the true path?

The work of Coomaraswamy is a recall to order. In an age in which, after losing sight of God the cause, man, the effect, is in his turn lost intellectually in a maze of dusty notions corresponding to a host of improbable bipeds, the voice of Coomaraswamy was first raised in the wilderness. Nothing could be more in accordance with the rules. The wilderness to-day, is becoming inhabited. Although still few in number, those who already belong to a world risen from its own ashes, profit by what such a voice has to say. Like a fertilising spring rain which sets in motion the expectant subterranean germinations, the radiant wisdom of Coomaraswamy stimulates a vital activity in those who, having looked on death, desire resurrection.

The principle is the Unique. Therefore its manifestation can only be One.

Either Reason admits this from the beginning, or it is obliged to admit it in the end, after having presumed to disregard it and relied exclusively on what makes an immediate impression on the senses and the memory: passivity, multiplicity, diversity, change.<sup>1</sup>

It remains true that a mysterious aspiration impels us, ceaselessly, in the lowest depths of our being, to seek Unity. At every turn the sacrifice of the individual is demanded for the benefit of what we are assured is a superior and more valid construction, classifications, social communities or particular groups formed for various reasons. The authority of the Principle is thus unconsciously attested even on these lower levels. Above the sensible appearances rises a precise, invisible reality which transforms them into an irreducible mystical body. In the same way, the daily action of each of us, the passing of the moments of our existence as it runs its course, leads us to self-knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> There is, moreover, a fundamental error in this adherence to plurality and instability. What the senses should usefully teach is rather the similarity existing between material bodies and the consistency of their processes of development. This identity should immediately lead to the inference of *one* causal reality transcending all effects and all degrees of perfection.



to an awareness of this mystical body which, while espousing *form* more or less faithfully, is a vehicle in the journey towards unity, the ultimate purpose of our existence.

Every mystical body is analogous to every other mystical body; this is true in spite of relationships of orders of magnitude which are valid only on the *sensible plane* (that of quantity), and which are completely foreign to the mystical body because it is ruled only by quality, the intensity of the degree of perfection. When perfection is realised, the mystical body achieves its aim, namely the identity and the quality which unite it with the one and only manifestation of the *single* principle. The transcendent recognises the immanent.

The profound affinities between individuals are, without any doubt, a result of this mystical analogy. Beyond particular distinctions, beyond the fields of action chosen by different individuals, there is a contemplative region where what once seemed dissimilar and separate now appears simplified and brought together in the form of the Spirit, an ocean of light in which the chromatic streams of the rivers and of the multi-coloured waters come to be resolved. It is to this analogy that I owe my meeting with Coomaraswamy. As a Westerner concerned in seeking the traditional foundations of a plastic mode of expression—painting, lost as it is in the darkest depths of aesthetics—I had the pleasure, one memorable day, of receiving a message from the great Oriental thinker.

How many corroborations did this message bring me!

A Westerner will often need, to confirm him in the way of redemption, the Star which shines in the Eastern Sky; to-day more so than ever. In monstrous pride, the West has abjured all traditional ties. The more it disintegrates, the more it broadcasts its belief in material progress. Let a Westerner but dare, in his own country, to evoke this tradition, let him find within himself any reason for returning to it in a humble spirit, and he will find all defences raised against him or he will be met with a stony silence.

The East defends itself better against the prejudices of modernism. The boastful claims of the West have not stifled in the depths of its heart a tenacious fidelity to the Principle. That is why an Oriental of the stamp of Coomaraswamy is able to approach the serious question of tradition, theological and metaphysical, and, while remaining profoundly attached to the expression of it given by his own race, to raise it to the level of humanity in its entirety. In his approach to me, Coomaraswamy induced no kind of upsetting of that orientation which was mine by reason of my origins. Christian I was, and Christian I remained. His teaching did not oppose any particular interpretation of tradition to any other; it did not encourage proselytism in favour of any confessional monopoly; he served that primordial and final unity which both precedes and follows all forms and all words. The comparisons which he made between the spoken and formal expressions of the East and the West, whenever they demonstrated traditional purity, emphasised forcibly a common origin and a common consummation.

In the course of my personal researches, I had been struck by some fundamental similarities presented by plastic works of religious inspiration, both Eastern and Western. There could be no question here of superficial influences, but of a similar state of mind using the same method of expression in order to make itself understood. This evidence had in no wise weakened my Christian faith. On the contrary, it strengthened it and a Romanesque Church remained closer to me than a Hindu temple. I spoke its language; the figures, symbols, and signs which it used were more accessible to me than those of the Hindu temple.

Coomaraswamy, by giving me perfect enlightenment, by inviting me to share the fruits of his great learning, helped me to a better understanding and a fuller awareness of the treasures of my own heritage. Thanks to him the Christian rediscovered himself in a mood of integral understanding of the magnificence of the letter, of the telling power of the iconographic figures, borne out by what his own discoveries concerning the technique of the traditional act had in part allowed him to see.

The traditional act which is the mainstay of affabulation, "*imitates Nature in its operations.*" It is the development of a germinating centre, situated in man, and its reality is that of the "object." The object is man himself, revealing himself to himself, becoming aware of himself. At a given moment one finds that the West gave up creating the object. By a divergence, by a slow and insidious aberration, living experience was replaced by external observation, which, depending on sensations, claims to reach the object through the "subject," a point of view and an opinion which provoke continual misunderstanding and fruitless commentaries. Ending with the complete disappearance of the observer, subjective man is carried away by his own negation.

Coomaraswamy denounced this error, this collapse of judgment which is responsible for the breaking up of the world of to-day.

However humble or bold it may appear, every human act possesses a ritual meaning. Work is the activity ordained for the accomplishment of this act of which the archetype is divine.

When the spirit of this act is lost, work loses all significance ; it becomes a curse. It is understandable that man so blinded should seek to be free of it. The machines which work instead of him are temptations which correspond to this desire for emancipation ; the external sources of energy which replace the expenditure of human energy have a seductive power which is justified by the falsified point of view. Intellectual theses, chock-a-block with good intentions, are built-up on senseless assumptions. Man suffers even in his own presence. The Westerner has carried the consequences of his delirium so far that his false science, from which he hoped for everything, has to-day led him to the point of admitting that "the Universe is an empty space and empty time." His speculations, stimulated by the phantom of material progress, finish up by reducing the reality of this universe to a mere mathematical equation.

The Westerner could not better confess his defeat than in this abandoning of his dignity as a man, a dignity which is consummated precisely by his peopling of those frameworks which are his alone, space and time, with the "objects" which he can make real only in conformity with the creative gesture-action.

In the periods when tradition is dominant there can be no misunderstanding of the profound nature of the human gesture. Relative in the face of the absolute, it is enfolded to the distinctions between the natures of created things. But it makes use of them according to their order and their capacity, either to blaze or else to indicate in firm lines the way which leads to God. So, for man, the Universe is "*an occupied space and time a direction.*"

The technique of the human act is ritually taught in authentic religious works. It is this technique that we should recognise, in the West as well as in the East, transparent beneath the iconographic representations, beneath the symbols and signs, illustrating the same traditional knowledge and bearing, both here and there, one and the same signature : that of integral Man, reinstated by his objective gesture.

Let us judge from the three following examples :

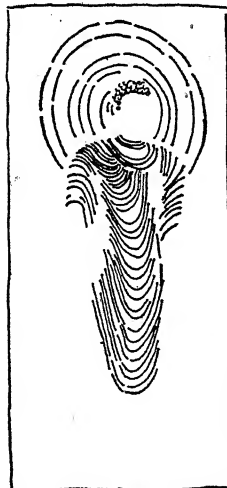


BUDDHA—THE GUPTA EPOCH



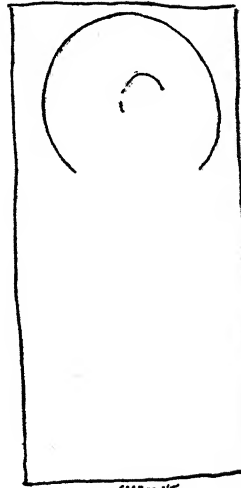
Buddha. L'Esprit  
la figure -

SPACE



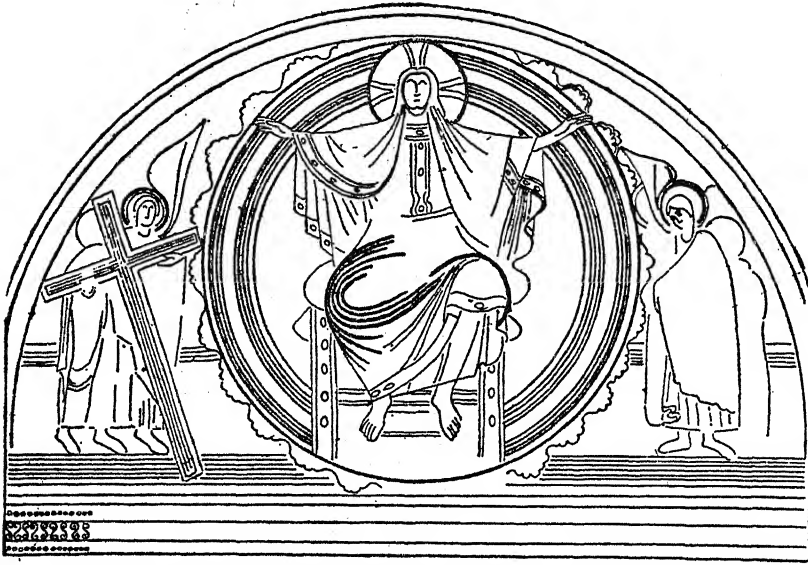
L'Esprit  
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TIME

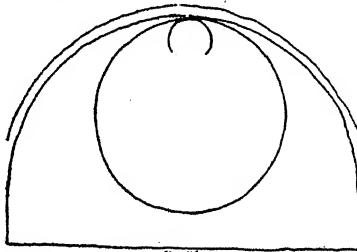


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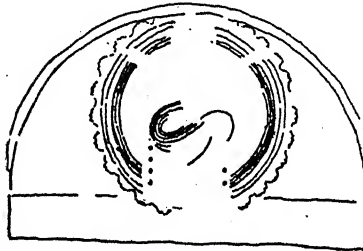
ETERNITY



THE GLORIFIED CHRIST OF SAINT SAVIN SUR GARTEMPE  
12TH CENTURY



ETERNITY—RHYTHM—LIGHT



TIME—CADENCE—RAINBOW



SPACE—FIGURE: MEASURE  
ACCORD OF COLOURS

These three examples are taken : one from the East, "*The Buddha*," the two others from the West, "*The Glorified Christ of Saint Savin sur Gartempe*" (of the XIIth century) and "*The Celtic Menhir*" dating back to the remotest antiquity ; by their identical structure they bear witness, better than any words, to a common aspiration and a common will for expression and direction. Even an untrained observer will be struck by this similarity.

"*The Buddha*" and "*The Christ*" are figured symbols, subordinated to the technical rigour of the pure act. "*The Celtic Menhir*" signifies simply the bases of the pure act. Whether by superimposition of figures or by the direct method of expression, they espouse the same *avatars*, submit to the same sacrifices, die and are re-born alternately in order to reach "*form*" which is their mystic reality, transcendent and immanent in the divine. The pure act is thus identified with the "*Word*," which is the *alpha* and *omega* of tradition. It is for this reason that tradition is universal.

"The Word," whose nature is eternal, is beyond our powers of understanding. But in its infinite goodness, it speaks to us in our own language and allows us to recognize *its* potency within us. It incarnates and, making use of the duality of our natures, the spatial and the temporal, it gives us the law. Listen : "I am he Who is, Who was and shall be." Sublime conjugation which contains everything, places everything and directs everything. It is for us to do what is needful in order to understand and transform potency into act. All our actions have no other *object* than the Word ; they become ritual on that account and engage us purposefully.

It is this conjugation of the Word, I am, I was, I shall be, as "enacted," which is clearly shown in the three examples of traditional works which I have just placed before those who will consent to consider them with attention. The East and the West of yesterday and of ancient times are there shown to be identical by reason of the perfect accomplishment of their living activity. The analyses which I have made of them fittingly separate space from time and the latter from the sign of Eternity. Practically, that is to say technically, space qualified by extension, is realised in *measure* ; time qualified by periods, is realized by cadence becoming curvilinear, and Eternity, in which space and time are merged metaphysically, is signified by the continuous circles of the haloes and aureoles, by rhythm accomplished in perfection. On the other hand, I have added an equivalent expression which is important because it takes into account the Light, to which the Word itself bears witness. Space-extension contains the colours ; cadenced time changes them into modulations following the order of the rainbow, which is the plane of witness ; while the Eternity of perfect rhythm, of ineffable light, is signified, according to the necessities of the case, by grey or by incorruptible gold.

God made man in His image and in His likeness. The human act, in the image and the likeness of the creative act, alone allows us to rediscover the Unity of God and Man. But man is not to be found, as Western humanism claimed at the time when the aberration had become an accomplished fact, in the bodily figure even when this is idealised, and still less in the present disintegrated *magma* reacting on the mind in waves and in atomic particles. Only by active work Man *is*—work of the artisan or work of the contemplative—which focussing him on the whole of creation, identifies him immediately, by means of the "*form*" which he realizes, with the mystical body of the divine work. Such was the doctrine revealed in the technique of the pure act, to which the Oriental *Buddha*, the *glorified Christ of Saint Savin* and the modest and authoritative Celtic stone alike bear witness. And the directions imposed by this technique, by serving first the

craftsmen who created these works, served as ways of salvation also for those who, by their profound internal aspirations, were called to follow them.

How far are we now from aestheticism! And if "*the Buddha*" and "*the Glorified Christ*," by the beauty of their workmanship, lead us into describing them as works of art, how wrong we should be to admire them only for this superficial display. The Celtic stone, devoid of any representational features, will not mislead us so readily. It does not lend itself to ambiguity and that is why, finding in it nothing to satisfy our mental habits and our over-refined tastes, we shall perhaps judge it scornfully. And yet, what it shows in a straightforward manner is precisely that which should rouse our admiration in the *Buddha* and the *Glorified Christ*, rather than the magic of their figures appealing to the senses. But we find ourselves here face to face with an instrumentation of which, long since, we have lost the use, bound up, as it is, with a personal experiencing which no longer seems to us to-day worthy of serious effort. In the traditional setting in which these works were "enacted," there existed a different conception of work from the one we have come to accept. The craftsman, peasant or artisan differed fundamentally from our trade-unionist, the slave of his machine. Because of the direct character of its function, work was the spontaneous image of the divine creative act. The sacerdotal elect thought it their duty to protect work and, under the most varied aspects, to bring out its significance to the full. The symbolic figures and the algebraic signs are, in short, its passionate expressions and no more.

If the iconographic figures, *subordinated* to the technique of the pure act, in no way serve to dilute the spirit of the tradition, if they permit, as symbols and signs, its presentation in countless subtle variations as required by circumstances and places, it is nevertheless true that it is they which must bear, by their seductiveness and their attraction, the responsibility for the subsequent aberration which will by and by become complete when, through having wished to possess a significance of their own, they will have broken loose from their own interior structure, of which, in fact, they should be only modalities.

From this supposed liberation the worst enslavement will follow, of the kind which gives all credit to sensible appearances to the point of depriving them of their symbolic value and of their power as images. At this point, aesthetics will take possession of everything and the "fine arts" will be substituted for the sanctity of the human act, until finally the confusion will be such that the aesthetic work itself, stripped of all authority, will be abandoned to the whim of the artist, whose personal physiological and psychological convulsions will claim everybody's attention.

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has severely condemned this aberration. He has done so in striking terms and the arguments which he uses are overwhelming. God grant that he may be heard! He has, moreover, thrown great light on the meaning of symbols and signs and has defined the doctrines which re-establish them in their original purity.

Following my actual tendencies, I was led to take a particular interest in the technique of form, having doubted from the outset the solutions proposed by academic rationalism. Thus I took up the problem again from the very beginning and finished up by sketching the re-establishment of the secrets of the crafts, in conformity with their traditionally human values. If this has been my task, it is to Coomaraswamy that I owe the enlightenment without which I should not have been able really to turn to account this technique of the pure act, of which there exist so many examples in the East and in the West—tracery, arabesques, linear curves and bare rhythms—mystical bodies, integral form rising again from the dead in space and time—all reunited, moreover, by their



PLATE LI

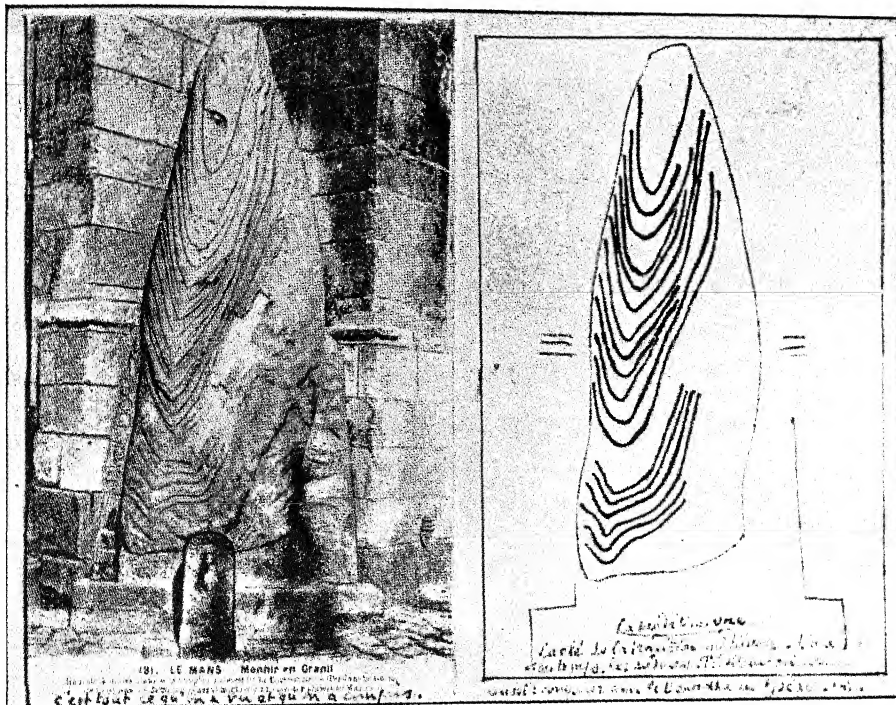


FIG. 1—CELTIC MENHIR

FIG. 2—ANALYSIS IN SPACE AND TIME  
ETERNITY IS TRANSCENDANT

ACTIVE TRADITION OF THE EAST AND WEST

content and by the means of expression they employ, to the mysterious *graffiti* of Celtic stones.

May I be allowed, while offering to him the foregoing reflections, to assure Ananda K. Coomaraswamy of all my gratitude and all my admiration. Serving as he does Eastern, and in particular Hindu thought both by that immense learning and that exceptional intelligence which have allowed him also to embrace the thought of the West, he has served Man, no less, in what he has of most general and most divine. The disintegrating world which is falling into ruin around us will inevitably be succeeded by a world which will be re-made by a renewal of its allegiance to the traditional principle. For without this nothing germinates, nothing grows, nothing attains its form. Everything, on the contrary, withers, is destroyed and sinks into nothingness.

## MOTHER-TONGUE OF THE DANCE

BY JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY (U.S.A)

**I**N several of his essays, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy cogently presses the point that Western civilization has lost the linkage between art and life, in the sense that all the arts were once applied arts, "satisfying the needs of the soul and the body together." I am presently drawn to his observation of this regrettable lapse, in his foreword to La Meri's admirably developed and illustrated volume *The Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance*; for in the dance, of all the arts, I believe that the Hindu achievement not only surpasses all other, but points the way to present progress in the field.

The origin of dance in ritual sets no limitation on its variety. Beyond its role as solemn movement in the ceremonial, primitive dance served with and as exhortation, in fertility rites, in arousal for war, in the summoning of rain—in all the moods and deep concerns of living. In the lilt of joy—exulting after the hunt, gloating over a victory, or in the buoyant exaltation of well-being—the natural movement was a dance. Thanksgiving or prayer, the dance in many forms was thus an essential part of life, linking utility and beauty.

The ritual use of the dance naturally required the continuance of the patterns that had early seemed efficacious or otherwise appropriate; these grew into traditional forms, preserved wherever the "ethnological dance" continues. Such dancing, as Coomaraswamy observes, "displays a theme, not the dancer." A properly developed theatrical system would likewise ensure a drama the kind of production it deserves; our custom of featuring "stars" tends to make the integration of the theatrical arts subservient to the exhibition of the individual performer. The repertory theatre seeks to overcome this tendency; but the very nature of the traditional dance does not permit it to arise. The traditional dance carries the wisdom, the emotion, the beauty, of a people. In this, the dancer is an humble participant. But the modern dance is a monotone of personal display.

There is, in truth, no modern dance; there are only modern dancers. Whether they work on the emotional impulse of the moment, or weigh and plan for months before recital time, each dancer develops a language of his or her own. The result is a choreographic Babel. Every time she stirs into the music, Ruth St. Denis will pattern a different dance. Martha Graham, on the other hand, maintains her choreographic design from performance to performance; perhaps even her forms keep the same meaning from dance to dance. But the only ones that heed and follow these significancies are the pupils of Martha Graham.—Until they go forth as concert dancers on their own.

It would seem plagiarism (or what in literature is so called), or at best sheer lack of originality, for one modern dancer to portray a mood as does another. Each must interpret "Pioneer," or "Ecstasy," or "Longing," in a different, individual way. It is unheard of for one modern dancer to perform a piece from another's repertoire. The consequence is an anarchy of dance patterns, with resemblances only in the major moods where human nature has already set an ineradicable design (as a drooping head for sorrow, a lively lilting step for joy) and elsewhere a wide range of gestures and postures

according to the idiosyncrasy of the artist. Often it is only the title on the program that gives spectators the cue.

Closer to tradition, though now in no way ritual, are the folk dances of the various lands. Whether danced in groups or singly, these are for the most part vestigia of primitive festivals. Planting or harvest celebrations, wooing or wedding steps, they have (like the drama itself) slipped out of ceremony, into festive romps. Yet they retain some stamp of their origin. Time has held them largely within the traditional pattern; they continue to express, if not specific impulses and urgings, at least the general spirit of the folk.

The more formal ballet has pursued a different course. Begun as court entertainment (though abandoned by royal performers when Louis XIV of France became too fat), it developed an elaborate system, at first of *port de bras*, then especially of leg movements and of steps executed *sur les pointes*. A number of attitudes and exercises became conventional; so that most ballets afford opportunity for a number of *pas seuls*, *pas de deux*, *de trois*, *de quatre*, in which the star performers may display their virtuosity—their elevation, their agility in *entrechats*, their pertinacity in pirouetting. More and more, the new compositions in the "classical ballet" exhibit such exercises without regard to the theme, or to the mood of the music, if only they fit the measure.

Outside of these meaningless movements—which are often, of course, made with skill and grace, as an ice-skater whirls, and shapes elaborate figures—the ballet owes its continuing success to its use of pantomime. Classical ballet is gradually lapsing into the charm of a bygone age. Its humour may be vigorous still, but its beauty seems increasingly dated. Its vitality is sustained through constant infusion of more current modes: it modernizes its costumes, comes down from the tips of the toes, and borrows from American "folk" dancing, both of the barn and of the ballroom. In this form, it has recently curvetted from the concert stage into the musical comedy. There, its patterns for the chorus present merely general moods. For meaning, in all its appearances, the ballet relies on pantomime.

We are told that every art is a language. No art is more universal than the dance; yet no art is more undeveloped in its symbols. Save within the traditional forms, every dance speaks in a different tongue. Only the ethnological choreographies carry the same meanings in the same forms from dance to dance. And among these, only the Hindu dance has developed a full system of *vinnyoga* (the use of a specific movement or pose to convey a specific idea).

If the dance is to develop an international, universal form—not in the sense of folk display of the "quaint" modes of other peoples, but as music, literature, painting, are international—it must proceed by way of a generally accepted set of symbols, a dance language. The only dance that has this, as I say, is the Hindu; and La Meri is already at work testing the resources of the Hindu dance vocabulary for use in western modes.

This talented devotee of the ethnological dance, out of a familiarity with the Spanish and south American dances, the American as well as the East Indian, and other traditional dances of Europe and the East, has recognized the basic problem of finding a universal dance language, and has seen in the vocabulary of the Hindu dance the starting-point toward a solution of that problem. (Since many dancers, intent on their personal achievement, are unaware even that the problem exists; and since facing the problem turns one against the western world's emphasis on the performer, on the star, it is not to be expected that La Meri will attract a host of disciples, or gain wide applause. Yet we

may venture to hope that the discerning will recognize the valid, yes the essential, nature of her pioneering, and that the trail she is blazing will in time become a travelled road.)

In her concert theatre in New York, La Meri has danced, with Hindu patterns of movement, to the music of Jewish and Christian hymns, and Negro spirituals. She has, with her group, taken the music and the choreographic form of a classical ballet, "Swan Lake," and interpreted it with the gesture language of the Hindu dance. These, and more dances of the western world, she has reworked with the rich vocabulary of Hindu viniyoga. The resultant performances, though here and there at first (understandably) too literal, indicate that La Meri has found a way to great enrichment of the dance, if not indeed toward the ultimate development of a universal choreographic vocabulary.

Certain observations rise from a view of La Meri's efforts. A language has various stages of development. The symbol may be a pictograph, directly mimicking the meaning. An intermediate stage is the hieroglyphic in which the symbol may directly convey the meaning, or may represent a syllable, or a sound. It does not seem likely that the dance language will ever reach a stage corresponding to the separation of words into letters; on the other hand, it need not linger in the wholly imitative range. To sprinkle water or to sow seed with the gestures that are part of these actual deeds; to listen by cupping one's hand over one's ear: this is to keep us in the kindergarten. Among the *saṃyuta* (combined hand poses) illustrated in La Meri's book, those for the feeling, such as perplexity (Figure 56) and humiliation (Figure 58) seem ready for universal adaptation. Perhaps some of those for concrete objects (flute, Figure 27; fish, Figures 18 and 19; bird, Figures 12 and 13) may seem too directly imitative to western eyes. The *asaṃyuta* (single-hand pose) of *sūci-Mukha* (needle), the index finger held upward, is effectively employed when moved before the slightly tilted head (Figure 177) to express hesitancy: "What shall I do?"—but to touch the nose with it and thus mean Nose seems rather pointing than dancing. It is true that such devices permit an extension of the vocabulary that enables the dancer to tell as detailed a story as does a narrator in words; but this may be an extension beyond the legitimate range of the dance.

What is legitimate will be determined, in the long run, by what can be accomplished with beauty and economy of means. What has been made evident by Coomaraswamy's indications and La Meri's discriminant work is that the means are available, to bring the dance at once closer to life, and nearer to a universally comprehensible significance. Our western tongues have travelled widely along the centuries, from their Indo-European source. Back to that same fountainhead of language we now journey, to find the mother-tongue of the dance.

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